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#702 / APR 2 - APR 8, 2009
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ERIKA WENNERSTROM'S HEARTLESS BASTARDS
FINDS NEW LIFE IN TEXAS

BY EDEN MUNRO
pg 37

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BALLOTS ON PAGE 181

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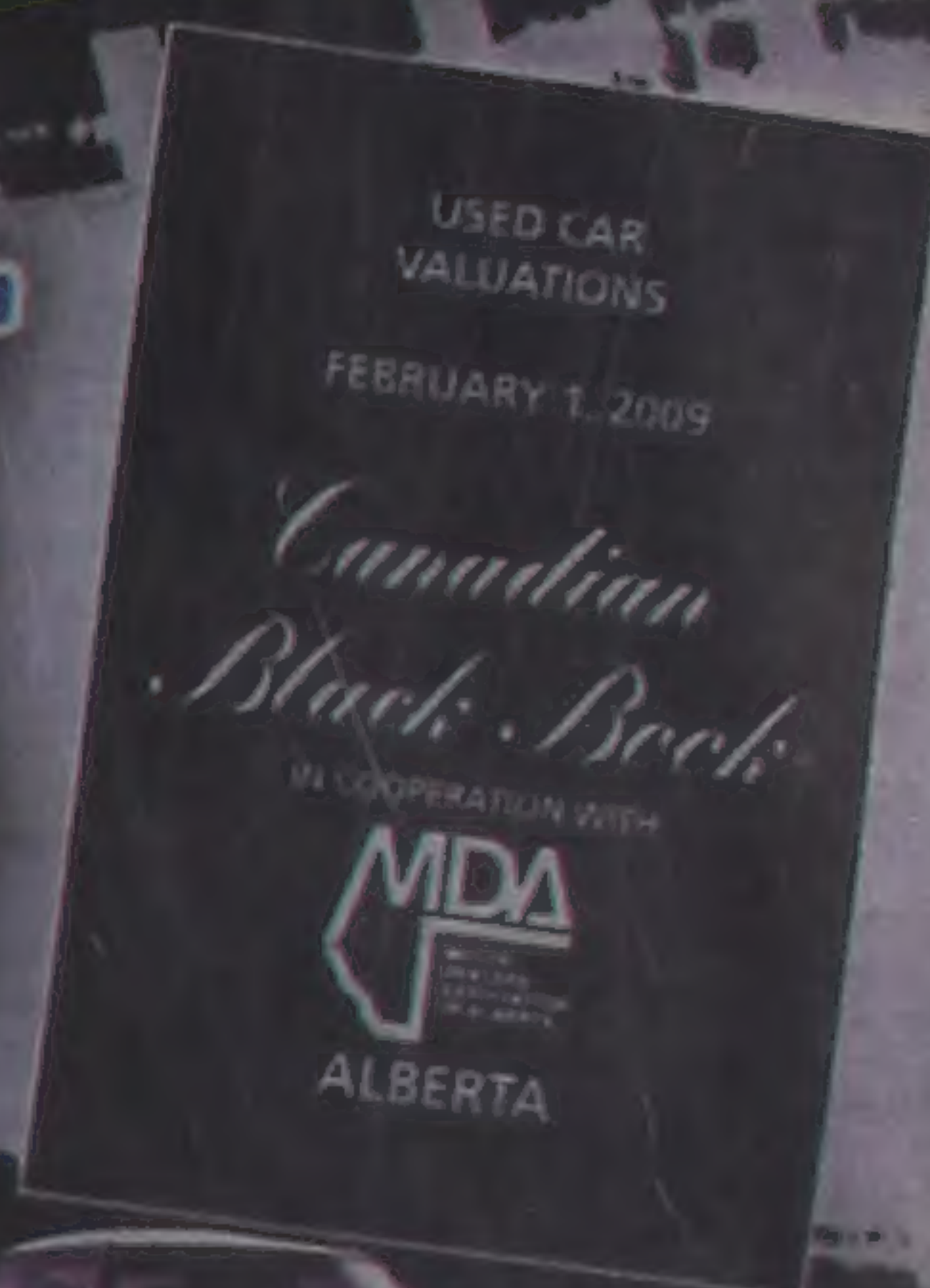
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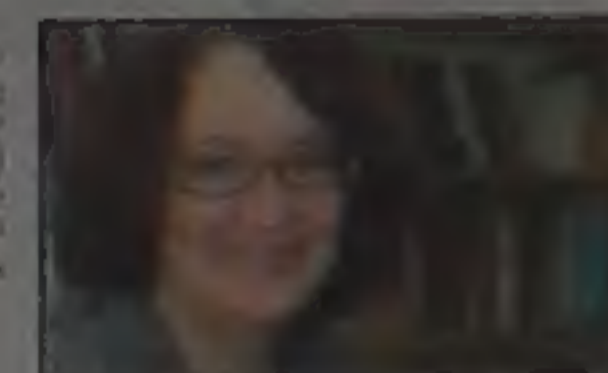
ON THE COVER



HEARTLESS BASTARDS 37

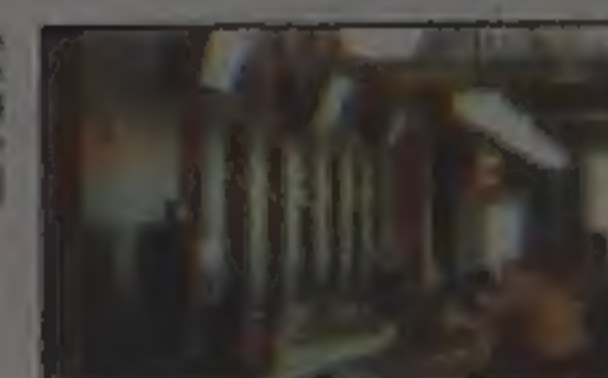
Songwriter Erika Wennerstrom takes the road from Ohio to Texas and revitalizes her band.

FRONT



JUDY REBICK 7

DISH



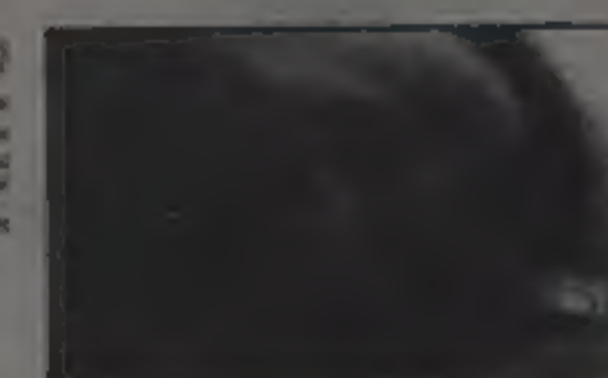
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Yet another wake-up call

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

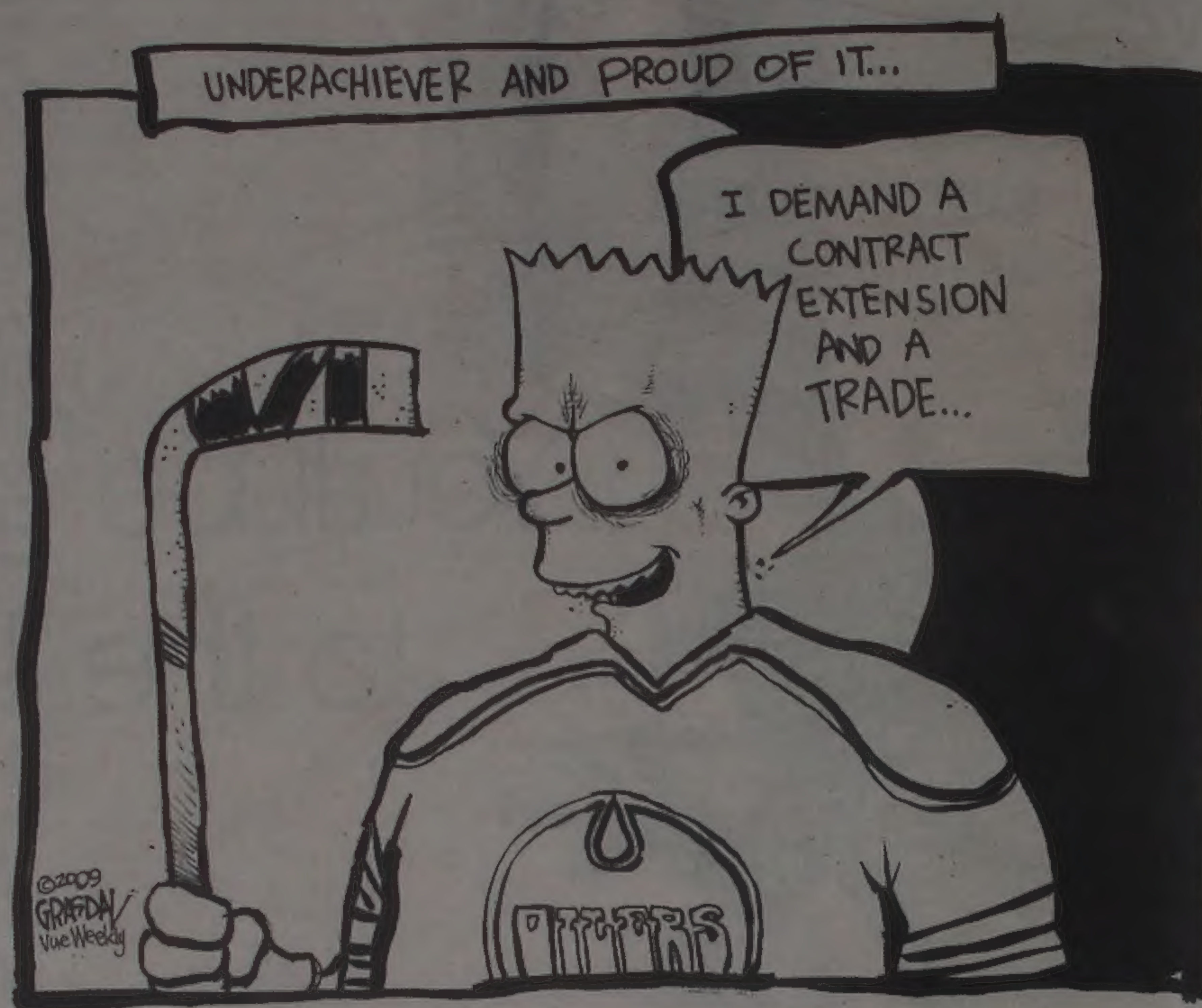
It's difficult to accurately represent with statistics the shameful living conditions endured by Canada's First Nations peoples, but a recently released study goes a long way in illustrating just how dire the situation is.

The Indigenous Children's Health Report, an international study which looked at indigenous health in Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand, reveals "striking health status disparities" in a range of indicators across all four countries between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

In Canada specifically, infant mortality rates for status First Nation children are twice the national average, while Inuit babies are four times more likely to die than non-Native babies. Over 40 per cent of First Nations children between six and 14 were found to suffer from at least one severe chronic health condition, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, obesity and the incidence of preterm babies were all problems disproportionately affecting First Nations peoples.

The report stresses that there is an "overwhelming consensus" that the roots of these disparities can be found in "social rather than biologic determinants of health," pointing out significantly higher rates of unemployment, lower incomes and a lack of access to nutritious food, safe drinking water and adequate housing amongst First Nations peoples. It also doesn't pull any punches as to how the situation came about, saying, "At the root of these disparities are historic and ongoing impacts of European colonization, which directly and indirectly impact health."

As with so many reports which have come before, the study should be a wake-up call for Canadians and should compel the federal government to conduct, as the report puts it, "an examination of the patterns of access to critical societal resources"—a move which would mark a dramatic shift in decades of government inaction. Until such a miracle comes to pass, however, First Nations peoples will continue to rely on another factor detailed in the report, "a distinct theme of resilience and resistance" in their communities, including successful cultural transmission and familial support networks, which have helped First Nations peoples in Canada survive generations of the kinds of conditions detailed in the report. ▽



Issue No 702 / Apr 2 - Apr 8, 2009 / Available at over 1400 locations

VUEWEEKLY

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Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40022989

If undeliverable, return to:
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PRINTING THE EDMONTON SUN
 DISTRIBUTION Clark Distribution, Barrett DeLaBarre, Alan Ching, Paul Gurdian, Dale Steink, Bob Riley, Wally Yanish

MAIL LETTERS

MORE ON VACCINES AND AUTISM

I'd like to thank Connie Howard for the rare report on the things we don't hear about in the mainstream press ("Vaccines and autism," Mar 12 - Mar 19, 2009).

Howard notes the information from CNN and *Newsweek* denouncing those people who continue to say that vaccines are wreaking havoc on our children. Try as they might, the media can't shut down this controversy. They report over and over that vaccines are safe, vaccines save lives, all the studies say so, but countless parents keep saying that their normally progressing children disappeared into autism following vaccinations. And while officials dismiss those claims as anecdotal and coincidental, the moms and dads just won't accept it.

Maybe if the mainstream press would truly cover both sides and tell us about things like the Bailey Banks decision awarding a settlement to the parents of a boy damaged by the MMR, we'd have to recognize that the science isn't settled.

Officials love to retreat to the mantra that studies show no link, but no one ever asks questions like: What studies? Who funded the studies? How were the researchers tied to the vaccine makers?

The Centers for Disease Control has

also actively suppressed and defunded epidemiological studies that might establish a causal link, and refused to fund research comparing vaccinated groups with unvaccinated-by-choice groups of children not in the public school system. I'd like to know why the agency in charge of the vaccine program is also in charge of vaccine safety. Why do we continue to give them oversight over themselves? Is it any wonder that all their studies show vaccines don't have serious side effects?

ANNE DACHEL

DIVISIVENESS WON'T SOLVE HIV/AIDS

It was with profound sadness that we read a letter recently published in *Vue Weekly* ("Ads leave a lot to be desired," Letters, Mar 26 - Apr 1, 2009) in response to the gay men's health campaign called "Do You Have What it Takes?"

As a national organization representing and supporting community-based AIDS service organizations, the Canadian AIDS Society knows that HIV/AIDS affects many different groups and people of all ages and from all backgrounds. We believe it is important to address each group individually, with the message and style of campaign most appropriate to the group being targeted. Awareness campaigns are often developed with the participation and input of members of the group(s) being targeted, precisely to ensure the campaigns are representative and serve their purpose. That being said, we also recognize that it's a challenge to

please all of the people all of the time.

Divisiveness has only strengthened the stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Most often this has been a result of deep misunderstandings by those who are not living with the disease and who are not well-informed of the many social determinants of health that cause it. Within the HIV/AIDS movement in Canada, this same divisiveness will create isolated, splintered factions, with each believing that their constituency is the priority. As a result, all of our efforts will be weakened.

In order to resolve the HIV epidemic, what is needed is a strong coming together of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. We need to support one another and trust that we're all putting forward our best effort to contribute what we can to the global movement. Isn't it judgment that in effect is at the root of HIV? Setting aside our judgments and working together is part of the healing that will ultimately help us overcome the epidemic in our country.

MONIQUE DOOLITTLE-ROMAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 CANADIAN AIDS SOCIETY

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

Networking power

Activist Judy Rebick comes to town to discuss the new politics

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

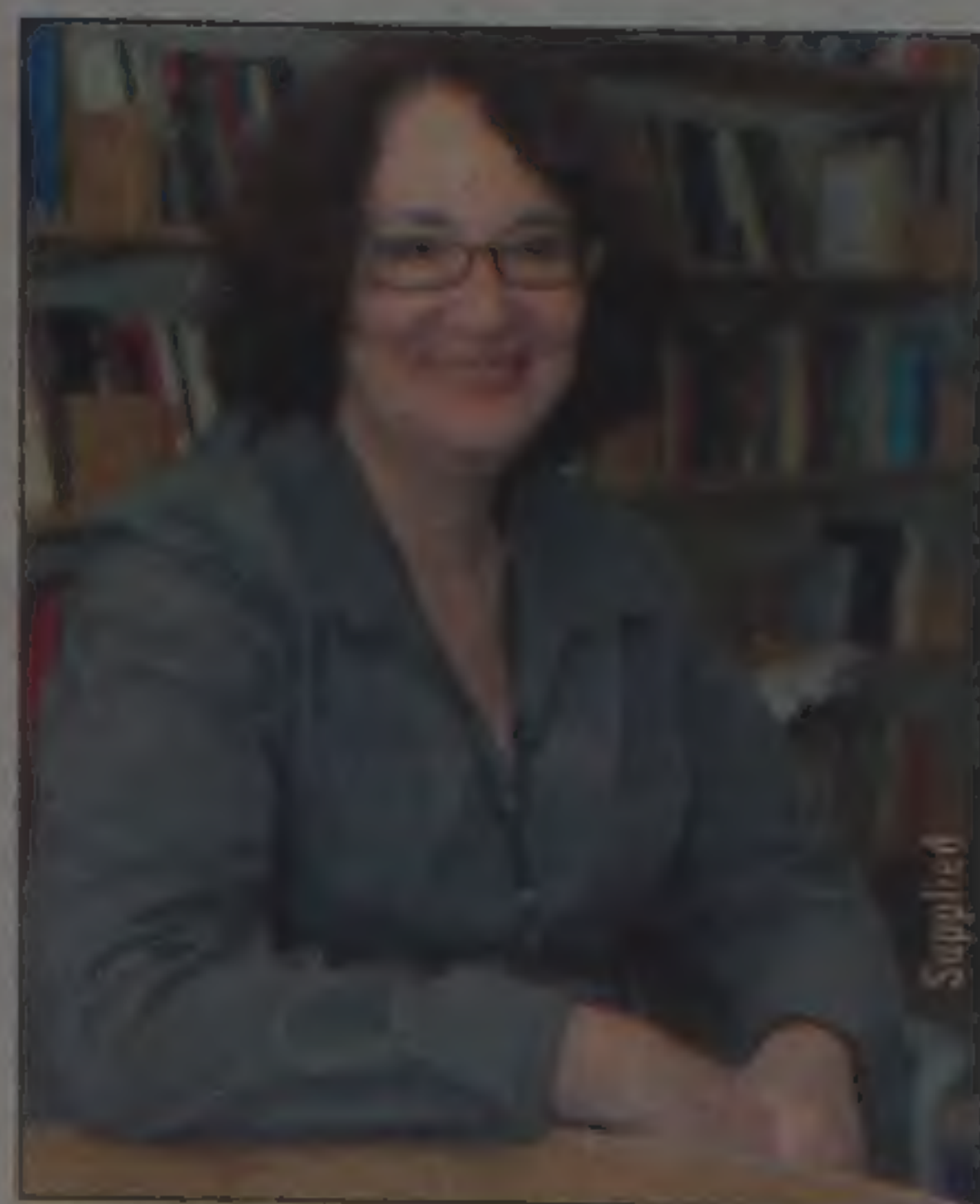
When veteran Canadian activist **Judy Rebick** first became involved in pushing for progressive social change some four decades ago, the approach was relatively straightforward: organize and struggle until you manage to gain control of the government, and from there implement the changes you want to see. Easier said than done, to be sure, but at least the strategy was clear.

"The old notion of the left was that power is something that was located in the state and in capital," Rebick explains over the phone from her home in Toronto, just back from a whirlwind tour of the Maritimes to promote her new book, *Transforming Power: From the Personal to the Political*. "And you had to take power—either by seizing state power if you're a revolutionary or getting elected to government if you're a social democrat—and then with the right set of policies and the right people you could change society. Well, that method has totally failed."

It was this realization of futility which prompted Rebick—who spent years in the feminist movement and labour and NDP circles before becoming the head of the then-influential National Coalition on the Status of Women (NAC) in 1990 and later a successful broadcast journalist and founder of *rabble.ca*—to begin to explore the new approaches of political organizing being tried everywhere from the barrios of Latin America to the crumbling inner cities of rust-belt America.

This exploration, which became the basis for her latest book and will be the subject of her keynote address at Public Interest Alberta's conference in Edmonton this weekend, revealed decentralized, grassroots movements more focused on changing power than in seizing it.

"I realized that there was something common, and this is this notion that I'm calling 'transforming power,'" Rebick says, adding that while the ideas aren't necessarily new, they're being implemented in novel ways. "The women's movement and later the anti-racist movement had the idea that power was located in relationships—in women's relationship with men, black people with white people—there was power



PREVIEW

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in those relationships, and that we had to transform those relationships if we were going to transform society. But somehow my generation never put the two things together. What all these movements are doing is putting them together and saying that change is about transformation, that taking state power is only one step in that transformation.

"And it's an important step—it's not that it's not—but all the other steps are also much more important than we used to think," she continues. "You have to transform society bottom-up and top-down, it's not enough to go top-down. So creating alternatives today, treating people well, living your politics have become important to all of these movements."

REBICK SAYS this new focus on "networked politics," has become a key element in today's most innovative activism, and is impacting even traditional top-down political spheres, as evidenced by Barack Obama's staggeringly successful grassroots fundraising and mobilizing strategy, and even in the ultimately unsuccessful push last year in Canada for a coalition to replace the federal Conservatives.

Even in the countries of Latin America which have seen leftist governments take power, Rebick points out effort has been put into democratizing the decision-making process to more actively involve the grassroots.

"Even in a place like Venezuela, where you have a charismatic leader that didn't win on the shoulders of a movement, in order for him to make the changes that he believes has to be made, he's continuing to make experiments in democracy, engaging the masses or the poor people, engaging them in active forms of democracy and experimenting with what works and what doesn't work in order to make the transformation that he seeks."

Rebick says that North America, where more traditional models on the left were more successful for much longer than in places like Latin America, decentralized movements are increasingly becoming the norm, powered in large part by the explosion in popularity of online social media, which has made it much easier for disparate movements to connect, organize and communicate without having to count on the corporate media to get their message out.

"People are using things like Facebook and online organizing very effectively. I was at a seminar at Berkeley, for example, and I said to the organizers, 'Did you get any mainstream media?' and they said, 'No, but so what?' Because they have such massive alternative media now online they don't need mainstream media attention to reach people."

The result, says Rebick, has been an upswing in people's involvement in political movements.

"Where I am I haven't seen a level of activism like I've seen this year in a long, long time—it's constant. The activism has really increased and I think that part of that is the ability to mobilize through online means," she says. "So I think it's very important, and I think it shows that people really want to get engaged—that's what's most important about it to me—it shows that people want to get engaged, and you can reach a much broader group of people than you could otherwise through traditional means." ▽

Netanyahu's fig leaf

COMMENT **DYER STRAIGHT**

GWYNNE DYER
gwynne@vueweekly.com

"I am not afraid of Bibi [Netanyahu]. I will not be anybody's fig leaf," said Ehud Barak, leader of Israel's Labour Party, defending his decision to join the hard-right coalition government being formed by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. But off in the distance there was a curious whirring noise.

The sound was identified by Ophir Pines-Paz, a prominent Knesset member who is on the left of the Labour Party. "Yitzhak Rabin, Golda Meir and Moshe Sharett [all former Labour prime ministers] are turning over in their graves," Pines-Paz declared. In fact, they are spinning at high speed, for Ehud Barak has abandoned Labour's traditional values in order to save its electoral prospects.

The coalition he is joining is committed to expanding the Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, and is led by a man who rejects the very idea of a Palestinian state. Netanyahu spent his entire first term as prime minister (1996-99) sabotaging the Oslo accords of 1993, which envisaged Palestinian statehood. As a result, the "peace process" had mostly run out of steam by the time he left office.

Ehud Barak's other partners in the coalition will include the Yisrael Beiteinu party led by Avigdor Lieberman, a Romanian immigrant who wants to demand oaths of loyalty to the "Jewish state" from Israeli Arabs, and strip those who refuse of their Israeli citizenship. So why did Barak do it?

The answer is simple: power. Not just personal power, although he will get the defence ministry himself and four other cabinet seats for Labour—not a bad result when Labour only holds 13 seats in the Knesset. His main goal is to keep Labour in the domestic political game, because it is at risk of losing out permanently.

Labour dominated Israeli politics for three decades after independence, and continued to be one of the two big parties for another 20 years after that. But in the last election it dropped to fourth place, and if it refused to join the government it wouldn't even be the official opposition party. Kadima, a centrist party, would fill that role, leaving Labour to get lost in the political undergrowth.

Barak was seeking some way to avoid that fate, and his opportunity arose because Netanyahu was looking for a fig leaf. While the core of the coalition that Netanyahu has built consists of "national" (ie right-wing) parties that support the settlements and reject a Palestinian state, some seemingly more reasonable coalition member would soften his government's

image in the United States. It's all about the optics of dealing with Obama.

Netanyahu spent several weeks trying to persuade Tzipi Livni's Kadima Party to fill that role, but when she refused him he turned to Ehud Barak—who leaped at the chance. It makes good tactical sense, even if it is a betrayal of Labour's and Barak's own past.

FROM AN INTERNATIONAL perspective, it hardly matters whether Ehud Barak sells out or not, because the "peace process" is long dead. The fiction that it is still alive is occasionally useful to Western and/or Arab governments, and the international media are as gullible as ever, but no serious person in Israel or among the Palestinians believes that this generation will see a "two-state solution," with Israeli and Palestinian states dividing the land between the Jordan River and the sea along the pre-1967 frontiers of Israel.

Such an outcome was perfectly possible until Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing Israeli fanatic in 1995. Benjamin Netanyahu had to work hard to sabotage the prospect of a land-for-peace deal when he was prime minister in 1996-99, and there was one last chance attempt to revive it during Ehud Barak's brief premiership in 1999-2000. But it has now been dead for almost a decade.

Netanyahu doesn't really even need Barak as a fig leaf, because he doesn't have to lift a finger to prevent the two-state solution. He can just point out that there is no united Palestinian authority to negotiate with (and nobody will bring up the fact that Israel worked very hard to create the current split among the Palestinians by fostering the growth of Hamas).

The Obama administration in the United States is unlikely to put serious pressure on Netanyahu, because they must surely also know that the "peace process" is dead. It is politically impossible for Barack Obama to admit publicly that the whole thing is pointless and just walk away from the problem; he has to pretend to be engaged. But is he going to waste a lot of valuable political capital on it? One hopes not.

If you assume (as Ehud Barak almost certainly does) that all the above is true, then his decision to enter Netanyahu's coalition is perfectly rational. None of the principles he is sacrificing stood the slightest chance of being turned into policy anyway, so why not do what needs to be done to save the Labour Party? Yes, you'll get your hands dirty, but if you wanted clean hands, what are you doing in politics? ▽

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in *Vue Weekly*.

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'They only tell part of the truth'

Community activists charge bias in government's nuclear report

JAN BUTERMAN / buterman@vuvweekly.com

Opponents of nuclear power in Alberta say a "balanced and objective" report prepared at the request of the provincial government to look at the "factual issues pertinent to the use of nuclear power to supply electricity in Alberta" relies on a select group of experts with ties to the nuclear industry and omits or glosses over key information.

"In one word? Fraudulent," charges Pat McNamara, a Grande Prairie carpenter and founding member of the grassroots group Nuclear Free Alberta, pointing to the lack of representation of health or environmental experts on the panel which prepared the report.

"The thing that's wrong with it is

NEWS NUCLEAR POWER

that they only tell part of the truth," McNamara says.

While the report, which the province will use to guide public consultations on the issue starting in April, deliberately uses non-technical language throughout, McNamara says it fails to elaborate on key issues which Albertans need to understand if they are to make an informed decision on bringing nuclear power to the province.

The issues are complex but not impossible to learn, argues McNamara. As a carpenter and father in Port Hope, Ontario, he volunteered to fix the playground at his daughter's school, where Atomic Energy of Canada (AECL), a federal Crown corporation, had discovered high levels of radiation as early as 1978. What McNamara later learned about his community shocked him: Port Hope was contaminated with over 3.5 million cubic metres of radioactive material from uranium ore processing—enough to fill each boxcar on a train stretching further than the distance between Edmonton and Calgary—used in roadfill, driveways and other local projects. That experience forced him to become an average-guy

expert in nuclear technologies.

In the Peace River region, nuclear energy corporation Bruce Power has held several public information meetings to discuss its plans to bring nuclear power to the region. McNamara has attended all of them, and notes that while the company does make information available to community members and has representatives on-hand to answer questions, the gap in knowledge makes it hard for community members to meaningfully question industry representatives.

"For the most part people aren't educated about the issues so it's hard for them to ask intelligent questions to start off with," he says. "And then they know so little that when they're given an answer, they don't know whether they've been given a completely truthful answer or a partial truth."

MCNAMARA HAD HOPED the government's report would level the field somewhat, but he came away disappointed.

Despite the report's claim of focusing on factual issues, the section dealing with fuel disposal relies heavily on language describing work to be developed or still in research, with theoretical outcomes posed as "could be" and "likely." At the end of the day—or in the case of nuclear power stations, the end of several human generations from now—nuclear power stations leave behind highly toxic waste that cannot be completely recovered or recycled and must be stockpiled well into the timeline of those future generations. As the waste materials decay, they remain toxic—some of the the

breakdown products are even more radioactive than the original material.

"They're making it sound like most of it you can just take it out and use it for further fuel for the reactor," says Brenda Brochu, another resident of Peace River opposed to nuclear. "[Spent fuel rods] are far more radioactive after the fission process than they were before, so it's much more difficult to handle and much more expensive to handle. When they do succeed in getting some of it out for re-use as fuel, there's still a lot of waste left over, so it doesn't solve the waste problem."

"I think that Albertans are not going to allow this to be the final word," she says.

Denis Savageau, a grain farmer in Fahler, also in the Peace River region, is deeply worried over the future of local farmers if the combined efforts of the report and Bruce Power's public outreach result in a nuclear plant in the area.

He questions whether a plant with such capacity is actually necessary for the province now or in the projected future. His primary worry, though, remains the waste.

"My concerns about this are a little bit broader [than just growing grain]. When you look at the whole context of nuclear power, the number one issue that comes to my mind is waste and what are they going to do with this stuff? If I hope that my children or grandchildren are going to [solve] this down the road ... I don't believe that's a good option," Savageau says.

Lindsay Telfer, director of the Sierra Club Prairie, agrees the report is biased, and says she hopes the consultations in the spring will allow for a more balanced public debate on nuclear power in Alberta.

"I sincerely hope that there is a meaningful debate in this province," Telfer says. "I think that the report itself is tremendously one-sided. The way that they framed the so-called facts and the facts they chose to leave out I think kind of put it in a very particular light. At the very least, I hope that perspective is debated in the Alberta public."

The Nuclear Power Expert Panel Report is available online at energy.gov.ab.ca.



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HEALTH

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CONNIE HOWARD
health@vancouverweekly.com

Today it's Fort Chip, tomorrow it will be Peace River. Back in 2006, the Alberta government denied there had been an increase in cancer rates in Fort Chip, and now that we know Fort Chip has seen more than three times the expected rate for leukemia and more than 300 times the expected rate for bile duct cancers, now they're saying it could be chance, or, in keeping with our blame-the-victim character, due to lifestyle.

But the cancers we're talking about—blood and lymphatic cancers, colon, bile-duct and liver cancers—are environmentally sensitive cancers, and Fort Chip residents didn't see many of these prior to oilsands activity upstream from Lake Athabasca. And while it's true that environmental pollution is never the only factor in cancer, it's still our responsibility to act. We are, after all, the ones who radically altered the lives of those native to the region, the ones who took children from their parents and robbed an entire people of everything they knew and made them sitting ducks for substances capable of taking the edge off their floundering and pain. And, as the science of epigenetics is now showing, these wounds get passed on from one generation to the next.

But other risk factors aside, the truth is that the environment around the oil sands is polluted, and that chemical pollution has repeatedly been linked to cancers of all kinds. High toxic loads eventually equal impaired immune function and cancer.

And while Fort Chip residents are trying to deal with their anger over uninvited toxins, we'll move ahead with bringing new risks to Albertans. Alberta Energy has quietly, during an off-week for the legislature, and while our pro-nuclear power Energy Minister Mel Knight was out of the country receiving an environmental award, released a report on nuclear power in Alberta.

Edmonton Journal columnist Paula Simons points out that there were no environmental scientists, physicians or biologists on the committee who wrote the report.

IT'S BECOME POPULAR to dismiss precaution as fear-mongering, popular to argue that cancer is not primarily an envi-

ronmental illness. But according to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), 80 to 90 per cent of cancers are linked to the environment (chemical pollution, radiation, infectious agents, diet, tobacco and alcohol). Uranium in drinking water is, even at very low levels, known to be a hormone disruptor and carcinogen. Breast cancer maps from the US Centers for Disease Control data show that two-thirds of all breast cancer deaths between 1985 and 1989 occurred within a 100-mile radius of nuclear reactors.

Dr John O'Connor, who first raised the issue of harm being done in Fort Chip has, rather than being commended, suffered complaints laid by Health Canada with the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons for raising "undue alarm" among residents of the community. I would've thought the College of Physicians would know about toxic stress and be more concerned about the health of an entire group of Albertans than about them becoming alarmed, but I guess not.

The oil industry says it will encourage further "scientific study and a fact-based, balanced discussion" on cancer in Fort Chip, but aside from the fact that much that gets passed as unbiased scientific discussion is anything but unbiased, spending a mountain of money and an eternity massaging results and debating our best course of action will result in unnecessary human suffering and death.

It's not like we don't have greener options. Were alternative sources of energy to be given the kind of subsidies nuclear power has been given—Federal funding for Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd has tripled since 2006—we just might still be able to change course on time.

Harm associated with industry is often impossible to prove in time to avert serious damage—the list of substances once thought safe and remaining in use until serious damage had been done is long. Gathering unambiguous proof is a long, laborious and expensive process, and industry always has a vested interest in defending their activities.

The Alberta government plans to create an online forum where Albertans can voice their views on the nuclear power issue. I'm hoping that the voices of Albertans who value their health and the health of our planet won't be drowned out by the pacifying authoritative voices of nuclear industry experts. I'm hoping. ▼

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Province must spend to stimulate: report

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

A new report released in advance of next week's provincial budget says the global recession has hit Alberta hard, and the Stelmach government needs to respond with stimulus efforts focused on social spending and the creation of a new green economy to kick-start job creation in the province.

Breaking the Cycle, released April 1 by the University of Alberta's Parkland Institute, says Alberta's oil-and-gas-dependent economy could be the most severely hit of any province as the recession worsens, and that impacts on the province have already been significant.

"Alberta's been a national leader on a bunch of recession indicators—that includes retail sales drops, foreclosures, bankruptcies and, of course, employment losses," says Diana Gibson, the institute's research director and co-

NEWS | ECONOMY

author of the report. "Our unemployment level is still relatively low—we're at third in the nation—but we have fallen from first to third and are still falling."

Gibson questions government estimates that 15 000 net jobs will be lost in 2009, but says it's more important to look at the kinds of jobs that are being lost and created.

"It very much masks the places where we're losing jobs that are of great concern, and that includes construction, manufacturing and also full-time versus part-time," Gibson says.

"We've lost almost 160 000 full-time jobs [since August], but we gained just over 104 000 part-time jobs. If you just look at the net job-loss figure, it's very different from looking at the fact that

we're down 160 000 full-time jobs between the fall and now."

GIBSON SAYS the government needs to respond to the steep decline in the provincial economy with targeted stimulus spending in the upcoming budget that goes against the grain of the typical Conservative approach.

"The previous consensus used to be that tax cuts were a great way to stimulate the economy, but there's been a real convergence of fairly conservative and well-respected economists on the fact that tax cuts aren't going to stimulate the economy as much as direct spending. So they're advising strongly against cutting taxes," Gibson explains.

The reason is that Albertans are now likely to save rather than spend savings from tax breaks. Worse, as much as 40 per cent of any spending that results will have little local impact due to

Alberta's import-reliant economy.

"If you want to stimulate the local economy, the economists—and this includes folks like Thomas d'Aquino of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, CIBC World Markets, the Conference Board of Canada—are saying spend directly on infrastructure and social programming," Gibson explains.

"The other thing they say very clearly is don't cut. The government has to avoid the knee-jerk reaction they have every time this happens, the roller-coaster ride we're on in Alberta of cutting as soon as we head into a downturn, which deepens and lengthens the downturn. So the leading economists are all saying avoid mentioning of belt-tightening; we want to stimulate consumer confidence, don't cut public sector spending and jobs."

The upside is that unlike many other Canadian jurisdictions, Alberta, with almost \$45 billion in various savings or investment accounts, has the resources required to match federal stimulus funds and hit international recommendations for stimulus spending.

"The IMF and OECD, two big international economic bodies, have recommended that governments around the world spend two per cent of GDP on stimulus. We recommend that Alberta do that," Gibson says, explaining this would mean spending \$5 billion on top of previously budgeted spending, and in addition to cost-of-living and popula-

tion increases for social programs.

Gibson stresses that while the government has until now focused on breaks to the oil and gas sector, such moves have smaller impacts on job creation than other spending.

"You get far fewer jobs per dollar invested [in oil and gas] than if you put it into anywhere else in the economy, but especially in places like health care and education. So the \$6 billion in subsidies that have been announced this year for oil and gas drilling would be far better spent in other sectors of the economy, building renewables or investing in health care and education if we care about job creation."

Gibson says that despite the economic gloom, the upcoming budget is also a chance to chart a new direction in the province.

"It's time for us to kick-start a new economy and get off the roller-coaster that we've been riding of booms and busts in this province. Now presents a great opportunity. If we're going to put those construction workers that have lost their jobs in the oil and gas and residential housing back to work, we could do it building a new economy and diversifying off of oil and gas," Gibson says. "We have the opportunity right now to put them back to work building something real that'll give us dividends down the road in terms of more stability, and get us off fossil fuels at the same time. So we need an environmental and social vision that uses the stimulus to build a new economy. If we're going to put workers back to work we should ensure we're doing it in long-term, sustainable, quality jobs." ▀

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Re-imagining Canadian journalism

The growing crisis in mainstream media is also a chance to create new forms of news gathering

MEDIA LINKS

STEVE ANDERSON
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At a critical time, when the new media environment is being molded and the traditional news industry is in a state of decline, creative approaches to journalism are urgently needed.

Since my last column on the decline of journalism, the bleeding of jobs and the threat of local news outlets fading to "black" has continued apace. Along with a slew of recent layoffs, Canwest is attempting to sell off parts of its media empire and CTV is simply closing stations down. Journalists have even become active in reporting about the slaughtering of the media industry, resulting in what *The Tyee* describes as a "collective auto-obituary."

If news financed by big business is failing, what alternatives do we have?

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The Conservatives appear determined to cut financial support for, and/or further commercialize the CBC and other public broadcasters. The CBC is a pillar of our media system and needs increased financial support from the public, not more cuts and uncertainty.

In addition, federal funds such as the Canadian Magazine Fund and Telefilm could support news gathering and reporting, as well as add online independent journalism to the range of eligible projects. This could be combined with a new Internet Broadcast Fund, supported by a telecom levy, something I called for in my February column.

Having a more directed fund is not unheard of. The BBC is funded in part by television license fees. The acclaimed Australian community broadcasting sector is funded in part by federal grants via the Community Broadcasting Foundation. In the Netherlands, non-profit member-based media associations receive government funding and airtime in proportion to their membership numbers, with the objective to ensure that the diversity of the multicultural society is represented in public discourse.

In conjunction with other support mechanisms, we could also use the Local Programming Improvement Fund (LPIF), announced by the CRTC last year, which will be supported by a percentage of cable and satellite revenues and is expected to amount to \$60 million in the first year.

Regardless of the sources of financial

support, it is essential that all available funds go directly to media makers and media outlets for news production, and not simply be handed over to big media with no strings attached. The last thing we need is for public funds to be used to cover up the financial mistakes of the Aspers.

COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED JOURNALISM

Foundations, labour groups, non-governmental organizations and individuals can also play a role in renewing journalism by financing public trusts or specific charitable journalism funds that could support innovative journalism projects.

Barbara Yaffe at the *Vancouver Sun* recently asserted that while running newspapers as public trusts might work in the US, it won't work in Canada because we lack major endowment funds. While our philanthropic sector is notably smaller than that in the US, we are certainly not without civil society organizations and philanthropists who could step up to support journalism in this critical period.

There are several journalism experiments already supported from these sources. The independent, non-profit online news organization *Rabble.ca*, for example, combines support from individuals and advertising revenue with funds provided by a group of "sustaining partners" made up of NGOs, unions and foundations. *The Tyee* has a specific charitable investigative journalism fellowship fund that supports some of its journalism. Recently, Saskatchewan saw the launch of an independent provincial newspaper called *The Sasquatch*, which is to be run and supported by the non-profit magazine publisher Briarpatch Inc. *THIS Magazine* and *The Walrus* are also published by charitable foundations. While it's true that these outlets need more support, Yaffe's dismissal of community-supported journalism is premature at best. Rather than announcing that it's dead on arrival, we should be challenging both individuals and civil society organizations to ramp up their support for independent public service journalism in this critical time.

JOURNALISTS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

One way we can help fill the current void in journalism is to support initiatives where journalists themselves are taking over media production. For example, *The Dominion* newspaper is attempting to form a media cooperative that will produce a national newspaper. Both readers and media workers will be members and

given a voting share in the co-operative. *The Dominion* also plans to help fill the void in local journalism by launching local branches that would both function autonomously and produce local stories, as well as contribute to a kind of confederation-based national newspaper.

Journalists are also taking more immediate action. When *le Journal de Québec* media workers were locked out in 2007, they launched their own free daily newspaper, distributing 40 000 copies every weekday until the lockout ended. When the workers at the profitable *Journal de Montréal* were locked out this January, they quickly launched their own news website called *Rue Frontenac*. These ground-up initiatives suggest that journalists are capable of ditching big old media models in favour of new worker-run outlets.

Employees at Hamilton's local CHCH television station, which owner Canwest plans to sell or shut down due to its poor financial situation, are attempting to buy the station and run it a bit like a hospital. The station would be owned by the community and governed by a board of directors made up of community leaders. The community will need to raise \$500 000 and have access to the Local Programming Improvement Fund in order to run the station.

CHCH is just one of many local Canwest and CTV stations that the media giants are poised to unload. The precarious state of local TV, and journalism in general, should be seen as an historic opportunity to re-imagine what journalism should look like in the 21st century.

To save journalism in Canada, we'll need to use every tool at our disposal. It's worth keeping in mind that the most important journalism institution in Canada, the CBC, was born in the era of the Great Depression. In recounting his successful campaign to establish a national network of publicly owned but locally run radio stations—CBC Radio—Graham Spry declared, "our greatest ally was undoubtedly anxious, disturbed and alert Canadian public opinion." Are we anxious and disturbed enough yet by the state of journalism in Canada? ▼

Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for the Campaign for Democratic Media. He is a contributing author of *Censored 2008* and *Battleground: The Media*. *Media Links* is a monthly syndicated column on media issues supported by CommonGround, *The Tyee*, *Rabble.ca*, *Vancouver Observer* and *Vue Weekly*.



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GAMES

INFINITE LIVES

WARREN ZEHND
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OK, so it's September 12, 2001, and you are the president of the United States of America. It's all been a blur; you can't even remember what happened to the Pet Goat. Did he ever get that corn cob? Shake it off, get down to business, do some deciding. What now? Let's get Osama; lean hard on the Taliban, see if they'll give him up. No, huh? Maybe we can get Pakistan to lean on them for us. They won't? OK, well, maybe we can get China to lean on Pakistan to lean on the Taliban ... but China won't do shit until we stop leaning on them over Taiwan. Fuck it, airstrikes ... and arm up the anti-Taliban resistance while we're at it. Oh, now Bin Laden's in Pakistan? But ... Pak-

istan's got the Bomb, right? Guess it's time for a UN resolution, maybe some sanctions. Maybe the European Union will ... what? Strongly worded congressional censure? Articles of impeachment?

And that's even without Iraq and Katrina and all the other horseshit. *Balance of Power 21st Century* is programmed with far less tolerance for flailing and incompetence than is the real world. Chris Crawford's newly released—via his long-awaited Storytron interactive-fiction engine (storytron.com)—sequel to his mid-'80s classic of Cold War negotiation and brinkmanship might be enough to make you feel a little sorry for George W Bush, and is certainly terrifying enough to make you feel a lot sorry for all us poor humans.

Where *Balance of Power* was essentially bilateral—right down to the totally kickass box art featuring a bear and an eagle duking it out—*BoP21C*

simulates a more distributed world, with powers and players interlinked in networks of desire and ambition. In your executive role, setting goals and then figuring out how to meet them, you must see the patterns in this net-

gamelike simulation spaces where players (or whatever we're calling them today) interact with autonomous AIs defined by needs, goals and parameters like "compassion" or "hope." The idea—I think—is that, in a Storyworld simulation of sufficient complexity, stories and meaning will emerge procedurally from these interactions, as every action of the player(s) and AI sends ripples through

Storytron lingo) don't have to be people. You could probably build a dirt-bike racing simulator in Storytron.

Or, so I guess; I haven't touched the guts of Storytron myself, just watched it work as reflected in the mechanics of *BoP21C*. And it's a doozy. Difficult, like I said, but the difficulty bubbles up in a strange new way. It's not just the basic difficulty of a keeping-everybody-happy simulator, or the difficulty that comes when the iconic simplicity of a single red hotline phone is replaced by a whole rainbow of phones whose lines vary widely in temperature. After a few plays—disastrous presidencies, all—I began to feel just how organic the game is under the hood. The Storytron model of holistic interconnection of actors means old-fashioned mechanics, comforting Newtonian cause and effect, cannot be relied on. It's butterfly wings all over the place, patterns emerging from chaos, and gaming that kind of scenario can be more about instinct and intuition than cold calculation. Again, in creeps some sympathy for GWB and his gut feelings. ▼

It's butterfly wings all over the place, patterns emerging from chaos, and gaming that kind of scenario can be more about instinct and intuition than cold calculation.

work, find the places where a lever might move a mountain. It is brutally fucking difficult.

STORYTRON IS a platform and a toolkit, developed by Crawford to enable non-programmers to create "Storyworlds,"

the network of needs and impulses. A geopolitical simulator like *Balance of Power 21st Century* is the perfect way to launch a platform like this, firmly establishing that "interactive fiction" doesn't need to be a drawing-room conversation simulator, that characters ("actors" in

Not dead yet (but dead)

HOCKEY

IN THE BOX

THE OILERS AND THE PLAYOFFS
by Warren Zehnd

It's a cruel thing to say, but in the end, the team and the weather, things really feel like some crappy April Fool's joke. At a crucial time when the team should be gaining valuable standings points and ensconcing themselves into a possible playoff spot, they spent the last week losing. Five games left.

CRAZY'S CORNER (OR ... OIL-ER) I'm calling this one ... time of death, 20:45, March 31. This is the point in time right after the Anaheim Ducks made it 3-1. The Oilers' season is over. **THE OILERS' DREAM** (of the playoffs). The Oilers are on the bad end of five teams who are trying to cram themselves into two playoff spots. Unfortunately, this ain't like cramming co-eds into a phone booth. Every time you wedge one of them into the booth, no matter how well you grease them, one inevitably pops out. With a nod to *Highlander* (and some literary licence) there can be only two. Of those five teams fighting for playoff scraps, the Oil are at the bottom and are playing worse than the other four. No sir. This season, which came with lofty ambitions of challenging for a division title, has ended in a whimper. Well, not officially. Mathematically, they still have a fighting chance. But due to their concerted lack of any amount of real fight, I reckon the playoffs will be a mathematical impossibility by the time I write next week's column. It's a pity, really, to see a team with this much talent fall flat. I could get all literary, saying things like, "The best laid plans of mice and men, blah, blah, blah," but there indeed is the rub of it. Throughout the season, it became more and more obvious that this was a team badly in need of a plan or a philosophy or at least something resembling an identity. The good news is that without those nasty playoffs cutting into their summer holiday time, they'll have lots of time to contem-

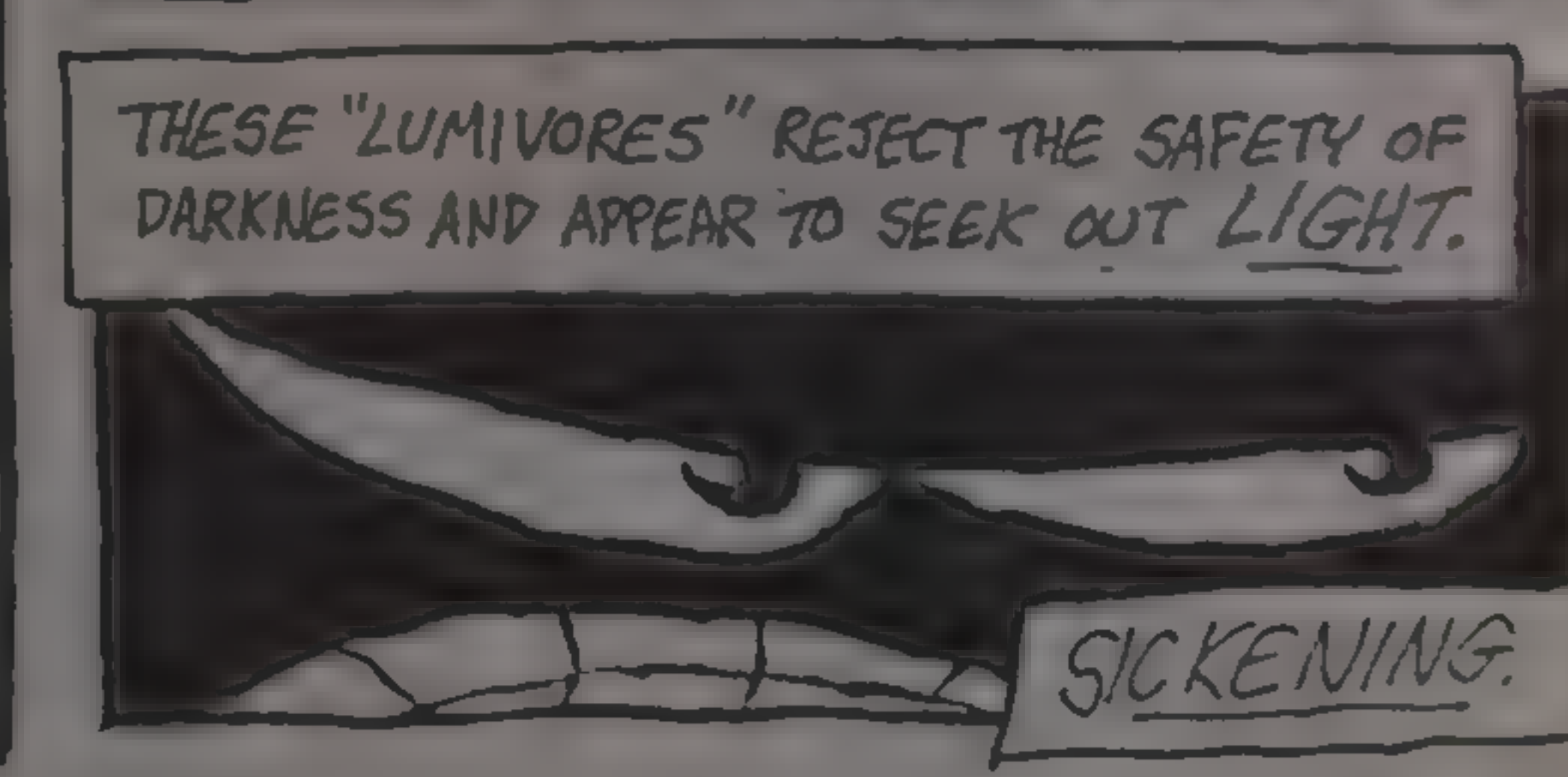
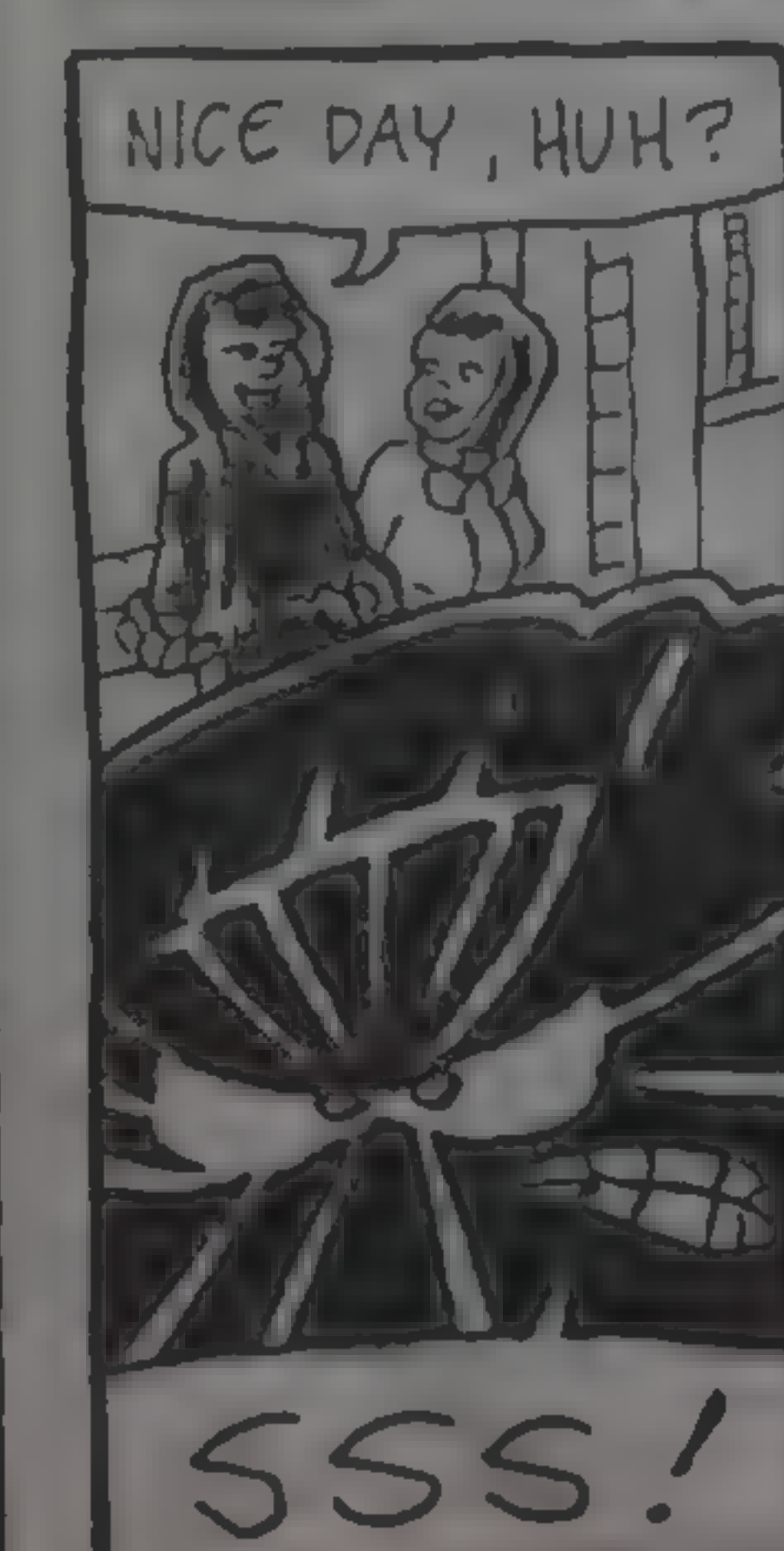
plate that over the off-season, TB

SECOND OPINION I'm not calling time of death just yet but the patient will need a blood-and-guts transfusion STAT. Come on, Oilers! Don't die on us yet! Not on my watch! Time to call Miracle Max. At this point the Oilers are "mostly dead" which we all know isn't "all dead." But it is close. DY

COULD BE WORSE Things are more than a little frustrating for Oiler fans. Playoffs are far from a reality at this moment. The team hasn't been in the show since the miracle run of 2006. Before that was a year without NHL hockey. Not good, is it? So, who's worse off right now? Here's a list of fans possibly worse off than us: 1) Maple Leafs fans. Their team isn't even sniffing at the playoffs and we all know they haven't had a Cup win since 1967. Even the younger Oiler fans can remember 1990, if only as children. Now Leafs fans have Brian Burke to deal with. 2) Islanders fans. Their team boasted the last pre-Oilers Cup dynasty team and had megalegends like Mike Bossy, Clark Gillies and Bryan Trottier. Since then, they've had a gonzo owner, weird uniforms (remember the mad fisherman?), little regular season or playoff success and a building that's falling apart. And they don't have the prospects and developing players Edmonton does. They've got next to nothing in Long Island. 3) Atlanta Thrashers fans. Your building is mostly empty and there really aren't enough of you. Your team is on the why-the-Hell-do-you-even-have-a-team list with Florida, Nashville and Phoenix. 4) Washington Generals. They just can't seem to beat the Harlem Globetrotters with just six wins and an estimated 13 000 losses. Does this help? DY

THIS WEEK'S OILER DEFINITION

"Must-Win": 1) An overused term to describe an important Oiler game. 2) A term that should only be used in a situation where losing a game will result in mathematical elimination from playoff contention. We're hearing the term used already but it will be appropriate soon, unfortunately. ▼



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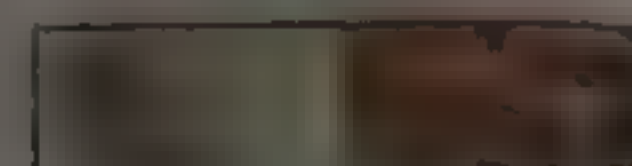
VIEW WEEKLY

DISH

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The Hat a mixed bag

KELSEY STROEDER / kelsey@vuwweekly.com

When it comes to food, especially new food, many people think that one taste is sufficient to judge whether or not they like something. But it's often not so simple, and there are many foods I wouldn't eat if my first taste dictated my future experience. So my rule of thumb is, "Try anything twice, as long as the first time didn't make you violently ill."

It's a guideline which can also generally be applied to restaurants. Case in point: my recent dining experiences at the **Hat**, located on Jasper Ave.

The Hat, located where its namesake the Silk Hat once resided, occupies a piece of long and narrow downtown real estate. The focal point of the "resto-pub" is a 15-metre-long bar of deep mahogany. The warm colours are carried over to the banquet-style seating opposite the bar. Exposed brick and a tin roof speak of the legacy of the space.

My first taste of the Hat was at lunchtime with the whole family on a brisk Saturday, prior to enjoying a show at the Winspear. I ordered a coffee to sip on while I looked at the menu, and was surprised by the limited weekend menu on offer before 3 pm. Five breakfast items, a few salads, and five burgers—this was not the menu I had anticipated. It was so short they hadn't even bothered to put descriptors of the burgers on the menu, leaving the waiter (who seems a bit grumpy) to explain all five.

After placing our orders, the food arrived, uninspired and overcooked. Because we were pressed for time, my family and I didn't have the time to send the food back and have it redone to perfection, so we left, disheartened by our lunch.

My second taste was on a Wednesday evening, around 7 pm. Four of us got settled into our seats and started the meal off with some drinks—the guys opting for Amber's Australian Pepper Berry Lager (\$7.50), a locally made brew that we will definitely start buying for home



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as the flavour and finish was excellent. As for us girls, we examined the short wine list, and selected the Bolla Valpolicella Classico 2006 for \$28, which went well with our meaty main courses. The wine list, perhaps reflecting the Hat's "pub" character, was small but offered up a few major varieties of grapes including merlot and shiraz.

HOPING TO GET a better idea of what the Hat has to offer, we selected a

couple appetizers to start us off, choosing the pork drummy (\$11.25), described as being two ham hocks slow cooked until the meat falls off the bone, smothered in a tangy barbecue sauce and served with their house coleslaw. When it arrived the aroma reminded one person at our table of a hot dog cart in the summer—not necessarily a bad aroma, but perhaps unexpected. We dug in and were rewarded with meat that, as promised, fell off the bone while the tangy barbecue sauce and creamy coleslaw complemented each other in flavour.

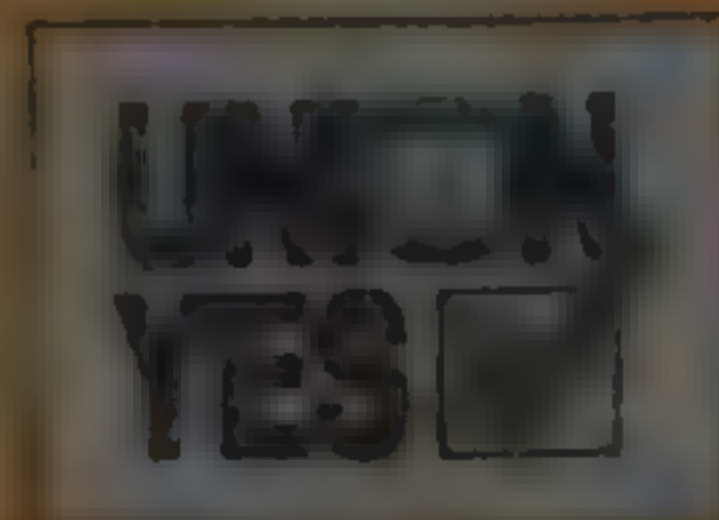
Our second appetizer was the baked brie (\$10.25). It was served

with a strawberry sauce, reduced balsamic vinegar and garlic bread sticks. In theory balsamic and strawberry is a classic combination; however, this strawberry sauce was thin, lacked punch, and only watered down the reduced balsamic vinegar. Attention to detail would have helped, as our Brie was simply not cooked long enough either; instead of oozing melted cheese, it was at the halfway point of hot and cold and had a bit of a rubbery texture. For something so simple, it was disappointing the kitchen could not send it out correctly.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 19

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Quick and delicious

Zenari's deserves its reputation among the office dwellers

Picking a Thursday to have lunch at Zenari's, I quickly found that it was bustling. For anyone who frequents the little Italian café on the bottom floor of Manulife Place, this should come as no surprise—after all, Zenari's is always busy. And it doesn't take long to see why: a favourite spot amongst the downtown lunch crowd, Zenari's serves up tasty, fresh comfort food—with plenty of seating and good people watching to boot.

My co-worker (who also happens to be my sister) and I hemmed and hawed over what to order—there are so many choices! The quick moving line-up gave us a chance to browse the daily menu, written up on the chalkboard, and also to check out what's on offer in the display case: salads, quiche, frittata, lasagna, as well as tasty-looking muffins and other baked goods. The menu also offers pastas and sauces of the day, soup, sandwiches and panini. You can order from the counter or at the little wine bar, which, if you ask me, seems like a very civilized way to spend your lunch hour. Ordering at the counter left me surprised by how efficient and friendly the service was, considering how busy the restaurant was. I decided on the gnocchi with tomato sauce, (\$9.95) and my sister ordered the lasagna (\$9.95). We also ordered a salad of mixed greens (\$5.95) to share and decided to order americanos (\$1.50 each) along with pannacotta (\$4.50) for dessert. The coffees would be delivered to our table when we were ready for them—which was perfect for me because I like to drink my coffee with my dessert, not with my meal.

OUR MEALS WERE BROUGHT promptly, and despite being warned that the gnocchi would take about 10



LUNCH
MON-WED 11AM-2PM, THUR-SAT 11AM-3PM
ZENARI'S
10100-101ST EDMONTON

minutes to prepare, it arrived sooner than expected. It was light and fluffy and the sauce was obviously fresh, though a little bit watery. It didn't detract from the flavour, however, and some fresh grated parmesan on top added just the right kick to the dish. My sister, meanwhile, was looking very happy with the lasagna. In fact, she said that it, "Tasted like what my grandma would make if she had been Italian." In a word: authentic. I was pleasantly surprised by how delicious our humble little green salad was. It was a simple mix of fresh greens with a sprinkle of grated cheddar, but the homemade dressing of balsamic vinegar and oil was outstanding.

We notified the staff at the counter that we were ready for coffee and it was prepared for us right away and

brought to the table with our pannacotta. My decaf coffee was watery, but I generally expect this and consider it my punishment for drinking decaf. The pannacotta more than made up for it, however. Pannacotta is Italian for cooked cream and is, literally, just that: cream, milk and sugar simmered until thick and then allowed to cool and set. It was so smooth and creamy, not unlike eating whipped cream itself but with a hint of vanilla. Its sweetness was balanced nicely with a drizzle of raspberry sauce and a few kiwi slices. We were planning to have just a few bites each, but it was impossible to stop. We thoroughly enjoyed every bite.

More than just a restaurant, Zenari's is a unique combination of kitchenware shop and specialty Italian deli where you can find gourmet olive oils, vinegars, pasta, honey and mustards. Serving comfort food that is tasty, filling and fast, Zenari's deserves its place as an institution amongst Edmonton's downtown lunch crowd. **v**

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It was a very good year

WINES NICE LEGS JAMES LYLE @JAMESLYLEWINE.COM

I was recently forwarded an email containing tips on how to save money on wine. Some of them were focused on consumption in a restaurant. One of the tips referred to the vintages of wine. The writer seemed to think that if you ordered wine from a vintage that was more recent but the restaurant tried to pass off an older vintage, you should immediately ask for a discount. Well, in some cases that might be true, but the writer said it as a matter of fact and not of circumstances, and seemed to offer no allowances or information based on the quality of the vintage.

More recently, when I was asked how my wine reviews should be sorted on viveweekly.com, I was asked if we should sort by the year. I said no. First, since there are not enough reviews to justify it and secondly, to sort by year is to assume that the quality of one particular vintage or varietal is consistent worldwide. It isn't.

A perfect example is Bordeaux. The year 2000 was considered a fabulous year, 2001 average, 2002 subpar, 2003 very good, 2004 poor, 2005 amazing. Substantial variations that in most cases are represented in the wine and, in some cases, in price. Be prepared to take out a second mortgage for a bottle of 2005 Bordeaux first growth.

All of that said, some fun can be had trying to find diamonds in the rough. I asked Wade at Wine Cellar to pull a couple of good bottles of wine from standard years. He offered me a bottle of 2000 Guillon Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes (\$44) and a bottle of 2002 Roda Reserva (\$35).

I began with the Guillon, a Burgundy. This wine is Pinot Noir and shows as a clearish, slightly weak looking juice. It offered a rich nose with loads of fruit only

slightly hidden by alcohol. When first sampled, it seemed rather tart but as it opened it offered a well structured and consistent body. The fruit was plentiful but lasted only a brief time. Overall, this was a very nice wine that I might turn toward if a bottle from a better year was priced too steeply.

Next I gave the Roda a try. I have never been a fan of Spanish wine, not due to any varietals, just because I hadn't tried one that had blown me away. With the Roda, made mostly with Tempranillo, I may have been converted.

The juice is dark and inky with a deep strawberry colour and its odours are thick, rich and coat the nose. Loads of alcohol cake the nostrils but it quickly gives way to a more well rounded but still impressive nose.

The tastes are as substantive as the nose. The wine is big with hints of earth. It has fabulous consistency; never overbearing but always powerful. I did find it lacked in fruit a touch but old world wines tend to focus less on a punch in the face. Strength of substance over splash. Absolutely worthy of a try. ▽

Mike Sisk



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Kick it up a notch

The spicy world of Ghanaian cuisine

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vanweekly.com

Ask Ellen Naa Ayikarley Mawusi, owner and chef of Ayikarley's Kitchen, how she would describe Ghanaian food and "spicy" pretty much sums it up. But you might want to add colourful—it's usually a vibrant mix of reds, oranges, greens and yellows. They're almost the same thing though. The different colours come from the various varieties of scotch bonnet peppers that form the foundation of Ghanaian cooking and give it its spiciness.

"But don't worry. The spiciness isn't overwhelming, just good," Mawusi says.

Mawusi has been cooking since she was five years old, and it wasn't something she even thought about. "You had to learn to cook. It's a must in our culture." She started by making boiled plantains. "Back home, you put these little stones together and make a fire. You boil plantains and yams and then you get to enjoy them—it's fun."

But her days of stirring simmering pots of fragrant stews over burning fires are over. They ended when she was eight and came to Canada with her family. The move didn't stop her from cooking, though. By the time she was nine she was able to put a full

PROFILE

ELLEN NAA AYIKARLEY MAWUSI
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meal on the table. "My parents went out and I was supposed to get my chores done, but I didn't feel like it. I made soup and dumplings instead. My Dad didn't get too mad—at least I had made dinner."

Now Mawusi wants to expose everyone else to the wonders of Ghanaian food. Last May she opened Ayikarley's Kitchen, a little catering company that runs mostly by word of mouth. And, depending on availability of stalls, her cooking can sometimes be found at the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market. She says kelewele—plantains fried with onions, ginger and those scotch bonnet peppers—is by far her best seller. But jollof rice, kind of like a rice pilaf, and black-eyed bean stew tend to be popular too.

Selling at market has one drawback—the food has to be frozen. It doesn't affect the taste, but Mawusi says it takes away from the overall experience. "Sometimes I feel sad about that. If people could only smell it



MOST GHANAIAN FOOD STARTS by simmering together a base of onions, canola oil and the scotch bonnet peppers. "After you have the base, you can put in whatever you like. There's no set recipe."

She uses her peanut butter soup as an example. She takes the onion/pepper base, adds the rich creaminess of peanut butter and then throws in some meat. But since a lot of her customers at the market are vegetarian, she'll often leave out the meat altogether.

Mawusi also makes spinach stew—but don't pass judgment on it before

you taste it. "A lot of people tell me they don't like spinach, but they like the stew."

Other than the scotch bonnet peppers and salt, Ghanaian cooking isn't really about adding spices. "We rely heavily on homemade broth or stock from meat for flavour," she explains, but adds that now that she lives in Canada and is exposed to a wider range of spices, Mawusi does dabble and experiment a bit. One of her non-traditional favourites is rosemary. "It's my own little twist."

Mawusi admits that cooking Ghanaian food in Canada is a bit different

than back in Ghana. She laughs and describes our food as "plumper." She's not sure whether it's the pesticides and the hormones or something else, but everything seems bigger somehow. "Here, when you buy chicken legs, they are plump and soft. Back home, if you want chicken soup, you just go into your backyard and kill a chicken. It's tougher, but more flavourful."

At home, when she cooks for her family, she still makes Ghanaian food, simply because "it tastes so good." But other foods, especially perogies and spaghetti, do make regular appearances on the table as well.

Mawusi is hoping to open up a Ghanaian take-out restaurant this summer, and her husband is in the process of renovating a trailer for the project. "We were hoping to have it ready for the spring, but this snow is kind of killing my husband." Originally she thought they might set it up in different places around the city but now she'd like to find a permanent spot and just settle in.

For anyone who wants to do more than just eat Ghanaian food, Mawusi also teaches a cooking class at the City Arts Centre. It starts at Kasoa Tropical Food Market on 118 St., where everyone tours the market and buys all the ingredients they're going to need, and then it's back to the City Arts Centre to cook—and eat. Mawusi's not sure what's going to be on the menu for the next class scheduled for June 20, but the last time they tackled about 12 dishes. Fried plantains are probably a given. And so is spicy. ♥

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THE HAT

BY JENNIFER HARRIS

FOR OUR MAIN COURSES, we stuck to the Hat's signature dish—the burgers, which are served up with the prerequisite lettuce and tomatoes, as well as the Hat's basil garlic mayonnaise. I ordered the mushroom swiss burger (\$14.25), but in a 4 oz size—I knew from my previous lunch that the 8 oz burgers were huge, and was glad to see that I could downsize mine. The Hat offers three kinds of fries—shoe-string potato, sweet potato and potato thins. Everyone else at my table went with the shoestring fries, so I decided to try the sweet potato—it was an additional \$3, which seemed a tad much, but was worth it in the end.

My burger arrived, smothered in freshly fried mushrooms and caramelized onions. I was impressed, as I could not even see the patty through the toppings. I assembled the burger, packing together all the parts, excitedly took a bite ... and discovered to my dismay that my patty was burnt. As my friends dug into their meals (no other problems), I flagged the waiter down and told him of my concern. He whisked the burger off, and within minutes my meal reappeared including freshly made and piping-hot fries. Second time was a charm, with my burger juicy and cooked to perfection. The only condiment on the burger—the basil garlic mayonnaise—did not really stand out flavour-wise, and I was left wishing for a little kick of

some sort of saucy goodness to meld everything together.

The sweet potato fries were shoe-string thin, and served with a dijon mayonnaise. Crispy and sweet, they definitely rival other restaurants in the city for best sweet potato fries.

Other meals ordered at our table included the blue cheese burger (\$14.50) containing blue cheese, avocado and onion strings, as well as the Signature burger (\$13.50) which was topped with double-smoked bacon, white cheddar, barbeque sauce, banana peppers and onion strings. I sampled the blue cheese burger and the classic combination of blue cheese and red meat was a definite hit, while the slices of avocado smoothed the whole thing out and the crispy onion strings provided a good textural offset.

I managed to wrestle some shoe-string potato fries away from my friends to try, and thoroughly enjoyed them. They were crispy, well salted, and soft on the inside, a perfect shoe-string fry. The fries at the Hat are so good I can understand why they offer them as stand-alone appetizers (\$6). However, if you want to order the special dips for your fries with your regular meal beware the inevitable added cost.

Overall, I'm glad I went back to the Hat for a second taste. The big question, though, is would I go back for a third filling? Possibly. I enjoyed the décor and atmosphere, but when it comes down to food there are some kinks that need to be worked out. ▽



FOOD NEWS! DISH WEEKLY

WHAT'S THAT SMELL?

Edmonton's annual garlic festival is now officially an adult. This year will mark the 18th year the venerable Edmonton-based restaurant chain has run the festival, which invites you to sample a gourmet menu at each of the six Sorrentino's locations in and

around the city. Canada's largest festival of its kind, the garlic festival is also a time when Sorrentino's does some major fundraising. Last year the restaurant group raised over \$230 000 for the Campaign for Prostate Health, and this year it will try and best that number. Funds raised through the campaign will go towards the establishment of a rapid access prostate health clinic within the next two years, to create a consolidated centre for ambulatory and urological services in Edmonton within the next five years and to build a focused prostate cancer research initiative. So what's the hold up?—he wasn't going to kiss you anyway, so you may as well get down to Sorrentino's. For more information, visit sorrentinos.com. ▽

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Laying tracks in the 'Fax

Come for the lobster, stay for the skiing

BRIAN ZUREK / zurek@vancouverweekly.com

It's done in Nova Scotia like it's done in the Rockies: the weekend getaway to the slopes for a little skiing. At least, that's how we did it. After the Friday workday was over, we hopped in our friend's SUV and set out on the 1.5-hour drive from Halifax to the vertical majesty of Wentworth, "Valley of the Snow," (skiwentworth.ca)—the Maritimes' largest ski area. Marble Mountain takes the title for Atlantic Canada's largest, a vertical powder paradise I'm told, and there is plenty of skiing in Maine—the Sugarloaf stickers abound in Halifax—but they are all more than a weekend's trip distant.

Wentworth is located about halfway between Halifax and Moncton, New Brunswick, in mainland Nova Scotia. The local landscape is rolling forests interrupted by valley farms, small communities, woodlots, cabins and old homesteads: rural Nova Scotia at its finest. By travelling inside 50 kilometres north, south or west of Wentworth, you can get your feet wet, literally, by dipping your ski boots in the sea (but watch out for those Bay of Fundy tides).

Wentworth isn't the closest ski hill to Halifax—Martock ("Serious About Snow") is nearer. Wentworth is to Martock like Rabbit Hill is to Snow Valley. I haven't yet been to Martock so I could very well be missing something wonderful, clearly a risk.

Regardless, neither hill is on the radar of Dalhousie University's boozy student ski trip. They ignored Atlantic Canada altogether this year, and chose instead Mont Sainte-Anne, Québec, probably because of the 1109 km bus trip. Wentworth is just too darn close.

But to Wentworth I went, with my wife Dee and a group of 13 Haligonians, to share an experience in the Nova Scotian woods.

WE ARRIVE AT our destination, a hostel near the ski hill, to a warm welcome from a kitchen full of friends, complete with steamed up windows, mismatched and dented pots, and a spread of appetizers and booze.

Our lodging for the night is the former home of Joshua Livingstone. "Uncle Josh," to his neighbours, according to the photo captions on the dining room walls. Once a grand country home, it is sprawling, with evidence of its stately roots in the staircase, that grand entrance and the spacious rooms. But it's not immune to time or the slow deterioration of



RIDE | NOVA SCOTIA

economic life in rural Nova Scotia.

Walking across the property, it's easy to appreciate how unique this home must have once been. The walk takes me back to a time when it mattered whether apple trees, historically and contemporarily ubiquitous in Nova Scotia, bore fruit. Hand-hewed logs and timbers, fence posts the same, all now leaning and broken, hint quietly the same tale.

I reckon "Uncle Josh" would have enjoyed our group and welcomed us into his home, but he probably would have thought we needed more to drink. We do our best to celebrate together and share one of Nova Scotia's finest traditions: the kitchen party. Together, spilling in and out of the kitchen, we cook and spill stories, drinks, laughter and tomato sauce. Truly some of Nova Scotia's best characteristics, according to us transplanted westerners, are its fast friendships, social tendencies, warmth, openness and infectious togetherness.

This seems to be a quality of the place as much as it is a quality of the people: all but one in our group of 15 moved to Halifax for various reasons. The Maritimes manages to keep them here for a few years, only to watch them drift away, slowly, in some new

direction, older, wiser and richer for their experiences out here on the Atlantic.

Yet some stay, content with the lifestyle, the pace of days, the coast, the lobster—and the skiing?

SATURDAY MORNING brings another Nova Scotia tradition: temperature swings wildly alternating above and below zero. I'm unsure where it's more humid: outside in the mist or inside the kitchen among the steaming pots of oats and tea. The weather isn't ideal for a day on skis. Most of our group decides to go cross-country skiing. As they file out the door I hear someone say, "We're an intrepid bunch, going out in the rain."

In alpine skiing tradition, Dee and I bum a lift to the hill. Without exaggerating, walking onto the property at Wentworth I'm reminded of Revelstoke. I last skied there in the spring, and in part, conditions were similar: warm and muddy. One obvious difference is the colour of the mud. It's red here at Wentworth, just like Stompin' Tom's PEI.

As you may imagine, the association between Revelstoke and Wentworth quickly abated for reasons including basic geography. Revelstoke's vertical drop is 1713 metres, Wentworth's is 248 m (the highest point of land in Nova Scotia is the Cape Breton Highlands at 532 m).

Wentworth is not a typical Rocky

Mountain resort but it doesn't try to be either. Its lodge, relatively new, open and expansive with exposed timber beams, looks and feels like it should: a backcountry-meets-front-country cabin. It's not an alpine lodge because, well, there is no alpine here.

What it lacks in elevation, it makes up for with snow guns. But there is only so much a snow gun can do. Starry skies and -15° C greeted us at the hostel the night before, but by the time we're in our ski boots, fog, threat of rain and a temperature of 4° C is in the air. Manmade—or natural—snow treated to such wild swings in temperature sounds and feels much the same in Nova Scotia as it does in the Rockies: loud and firm.

Everyone who skis and boards at Wentworth knows what to expect of the snow, and of the hill, and that was obvious. The people are there because they love to ski, because they love the day spent outdoors with their family, their friends. In the days prior to my trip, the overwhelming majority of the people I spoke with said that Wentworth was a good little hill.

It's clear now that the atmosphere and the people at Wentworth, the staff and the guests are as much responsible for that sentiment as the slopes and the snow. The place just feels good. It's wholly unpretentious, it's warm, welcoming, and it's got no attitude. And, frankly, attitude is some-

thing many Rocky Mountain Resorts have piled more deeply than their snowpacks.

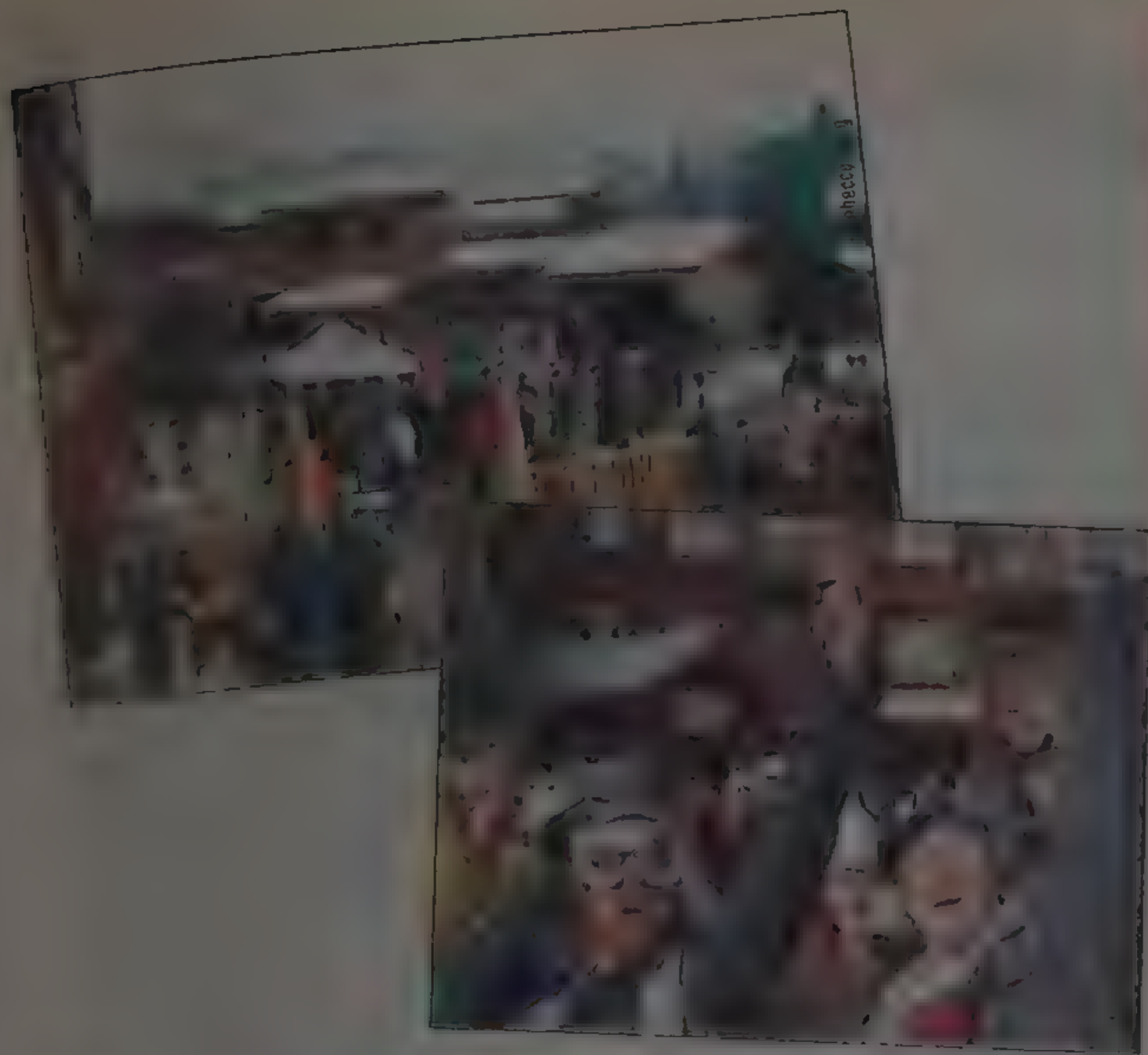
I'M IN SCHOOL here in Halifax, so I liken what Wentworth has to offer to something that I'm familiar with: USB memory sticks. The bigger the better is the common sentiment with memory as with many other things in life—including ski hills.

But I would argue that what you use (memory) or enjoy (ski hill) isn't always what you pay for. Unlike the Rockies, in the Maritimes when you ski or board you don't pay for "big." Wentworth works not because it is big, but because it's sized about right for a day on the hill.

It has one quad chairlift, one T-bar and two rope tows. That quad taught me three things: not all quads are "high speed," chairlifts will operate without Aussie or Kiwi lifies and on a clear day you can see the Confederation Bridge that links PEI and New Brunswick from the apex of the lift (a high-speed quad would rush the view).

The chairlift is a fine perch for the survey of other Wentworth amenities: terrain park, token mogul run and a good portion of its other 20 alpine trails. Focused on the hill (and not distracted by the lack of rocky mountains in one's peripheral vision) you witness a typical day on the slopes: groups of families skiing and boarding together; gangs of kids made of rubber "catching air" off level ground; racers slicing down the run directly under the chairlift; and the ubiquitous guy on rental snowblades, wearing jeans, open parka, looking happy but slightly out of control—even in the lift line. Dee and I were among happy Nova Scotians and we didn't wonder why. Scaled down, Wentworth works because they make the most of what they've got, and what they don't have, well, that's what snow guns and Ducky's Pub are for.

After our day ends, Dee and I rejoin our friends for the ride home. We meet at a local market—another Nova Scotia tradition—to swap stories of our day and formulate plans for our next Maritime adventure. Walking out of the market with a 10-pound bag of apples and a package of bacon (not a Nova Scotia tradition, I don't think). Dee and I discuss what we had learned over the weekend: skiing in the Maritimes is not like skiing in the Rockies, true, but lobster in the Prairies is not like lobster in the Maritimes—and we were happy to be in the Maritimes. ▽



What's a Fernival?

FALL LINES

Through the years, our Rocky Mountain Ski Resorts have introduced numerous spring ski festivals. Some have stood the test of time. Others just melted away. First there was the Slush Cup, and then came the Sunpit Safari, Beach Bash and Spring Fling followed by numerous events shamelessly named after their sponsors who usually represented a brewery or two.

This year, Fernie has finally gotten into the spirit and last week announced the birth of its new spring festival dubbed the first annual Fernival event. This party is slated for the closing weekend taking place on April 18 - 19. Every event needs an annual slogan and for their first one

their pick is unique. "SN-O-BAMA" is the theme and before a certain American President comes to mind they do have an alternate explanation.

Sn-o-bama is the compilation of snow and "bama" which in urban lingo means crazy, outrageous and odd. They are definitely not far off in that regard because they are asking the weekend's revellers to go back in time and ski in their jeans. I'm thinking it's going to be a really wet weekend.

Fernie's ski plaza will be central to most of the weekend's activities with the highlight event taking place on Saturday afternoon from 3 - 5 pm as Spirit of the West will be on hand to entertain you with the band's unique blend of folk, rock and Celtic fire. Some festivals come and go but I'm guessing that this one's going to be around for awhile. I wonder what took them so long. Maybe they were just worn out from their Griz days. ▽

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CONDITIONS REPORT

Local

Rocky Mts. — 80cm base, no new snow. All lifts and runs open. General conditions: Excellent!

Snow Valley — 80cm base, no new snow. All lifts and runs open.

San Rito — Closed for season.

Edmonton Ski Club — Closed for the season. Thanks for the memories!

Alberta

Canada Olympic Park — Closed for season.

Castle Mountain — 211-254cm base, no new snow. All lifts and 50 runs open.

Lake Louise — 181-203cm base, 12cm new snow. 9 lifts and 125 runs open. Check out the new Great Bear Lounge

Marmot Basin — 43cm base, 10cm new snow. 9 lifts and 14 runs open. Check out ski cams for live images

Mt. Manning — 93cm base, 16cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.

Mustika — 43-179cm base, 70cm of new snow. 5 lifts and 28 runs open. One week remaining in the season!

Sawatch Peaks — 173cm base, 22cm of new snow. 12 lifts and 107 runs open.

Tetonview — 50cm base. All lifts and runs open.

B.C.

Apex — 216cm alpine base, 46cm of new snow. Only open April 4 & 5, as well as 10, 11 & 12.

Big White — 208cm base, 19cm of new snow. 15 lifts and all runs open. Night skiing and skating rink closed for the season.

Fernie — 251cm snow pack, 25cm of new snow. 9 lifts and 110 runs open.

Kicking Horse — 168cm base, 16cm of new snow.

Kimberley — 112cm base, no new snow. 5 lifts and 77 runs open.

Mt. Washington — 228cm base, 3cm of new snow. 9 lifts and 60 (all) runs open. The Slush Cup and Dummy Downhill 2009 are coming up April 11 & 12!

Paseo — 40-120cm base, 19cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open. April 12 is last day of the season!

Powder King — 216-433cm base, 24cm of new snow.

Red Mountain — 202cm base, 5cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open. End of season party April 5.

Revelstoke — 236cm base, 15cm new snow. 5 lifts and 52 runs open.

Silver Star — Closed for season!

Summit — 154-190cm base, 30cm of new snow. 9 lifts and 122 alpine trails open.

Whistler/Blackcomb — 226cm base, no new snow. Many lifts, and hundreds of runs open.

White Water — 242cm base, 36cm of new snow.

U.S.A.

U.S.A.

49 North — 211-305cm base, 46cm of new snow. 5 lifts and 70 runs open.

Big Sky — 200-297cm base, 40cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.

Crystal Mountain — Closed for season!

Great Divide — 101-127cm base. 7 lifts and 80 runs open. Only open weekends.

Lookout Pass — 246-355cm base, 18cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.

Mt. Spokane — Closed for season!

Schweitzer Mt. — 233-320cm base, 20cm of new snow. 8 lifts and all runs open.

Silver Mt. Resort — 175-279cm base.

Sun Valley — 81-172cm base. All lifts and runs open. Closes April 12

All conditions accurate as of Apr 1, 2009.

Get up to date conditions, easy to search @ viewweekly.com

Bewilderness adventures

You don't have to do the math to know cat skiing rocks in Fernie

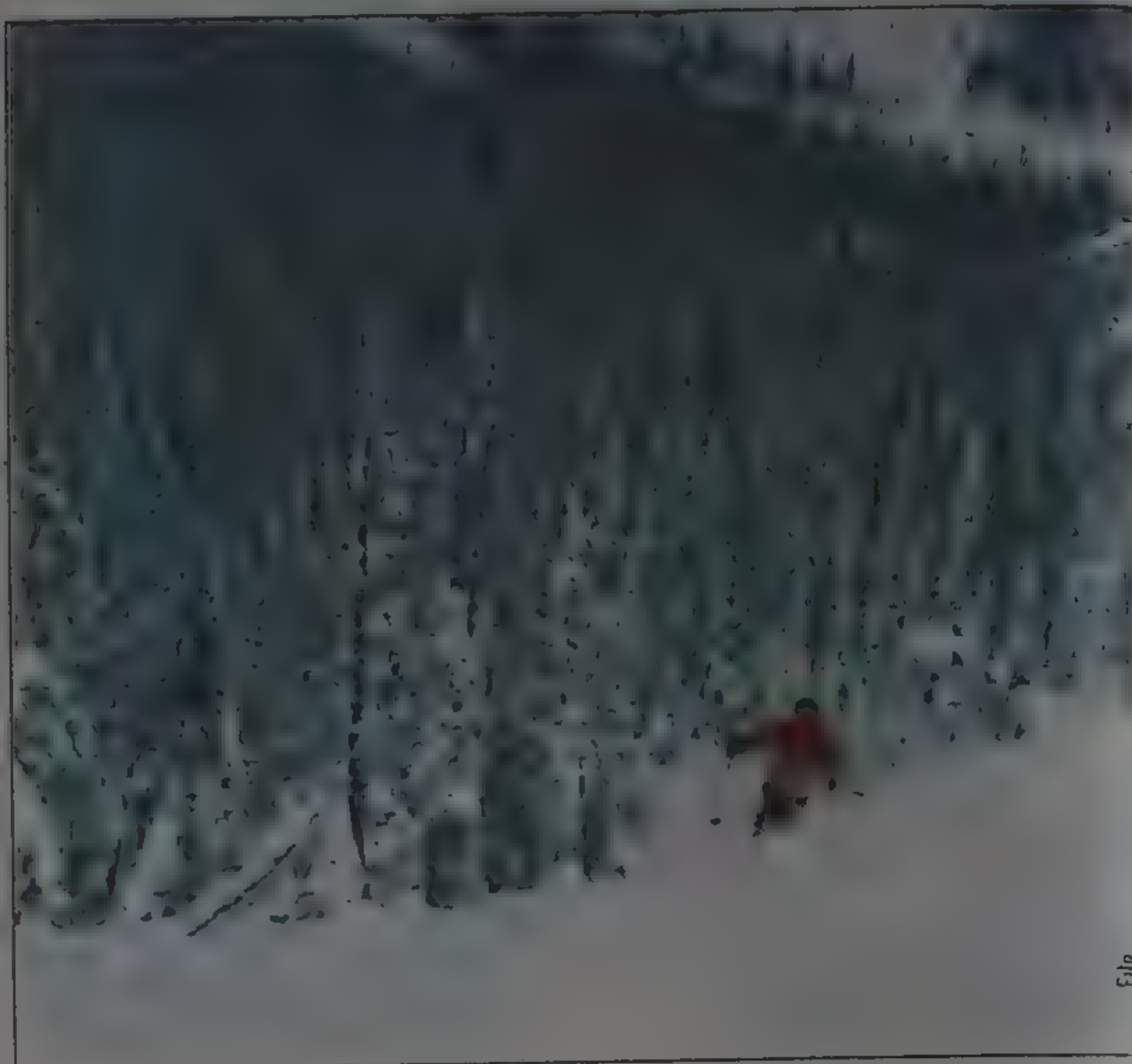
WILL COLFORD / snowzone@viewweekly.com

All 12 of us attempted to grow new eyes to see through the fogged up windows of our slowly ascending cat. The methodical ticking of the treads reminded everyone of a coaster cable towing a loaded cart taut with tension. We craned our necks, squinting for just one glimpse of the powder glory that awaited us.

CAT SKIING

At last the cat growled to a halt. We all perked up like animals about to be fed. The driver's boots could be heard, crunching closer to the door of our cab; it might as well have been the door of our cage. She heaved the door open and everyone bolted like the animals we were, suddenly released back into the wild.

That's where we were too: atop a wind-hammered ridge in the Fernie backcountry, cloudy and crested with deep drifts. The fog obscured a panoramic view but it didn't matter. On either side of the ridge we could finally witness what we came for. After the seven-hour bus ride, waivers



filled out in triplicates, two safety talks and a mandatory transceiver education course, we were about to tear into the best turns of our lives.

Resort, tour, snowmobile, heli and

cat are all ways of getting turns, each with their own pros and cons. Resorts can be crowded and tracked; heli-ski-

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First National (Circle for Pricing) Mountain Discovery

Last Golden rays of the season

ERIKA DOMANSKI / erika@vuwweekly.com

With a name like Golden, I half expect some warm early spring rays. Instead, when I arrive at **Kicking Horse Mountain Resort** in Golden, British Columbia, there's nothing but grey clouds and falling snow. But inclement weather was the last thing that was going to stop me—I had work to do.

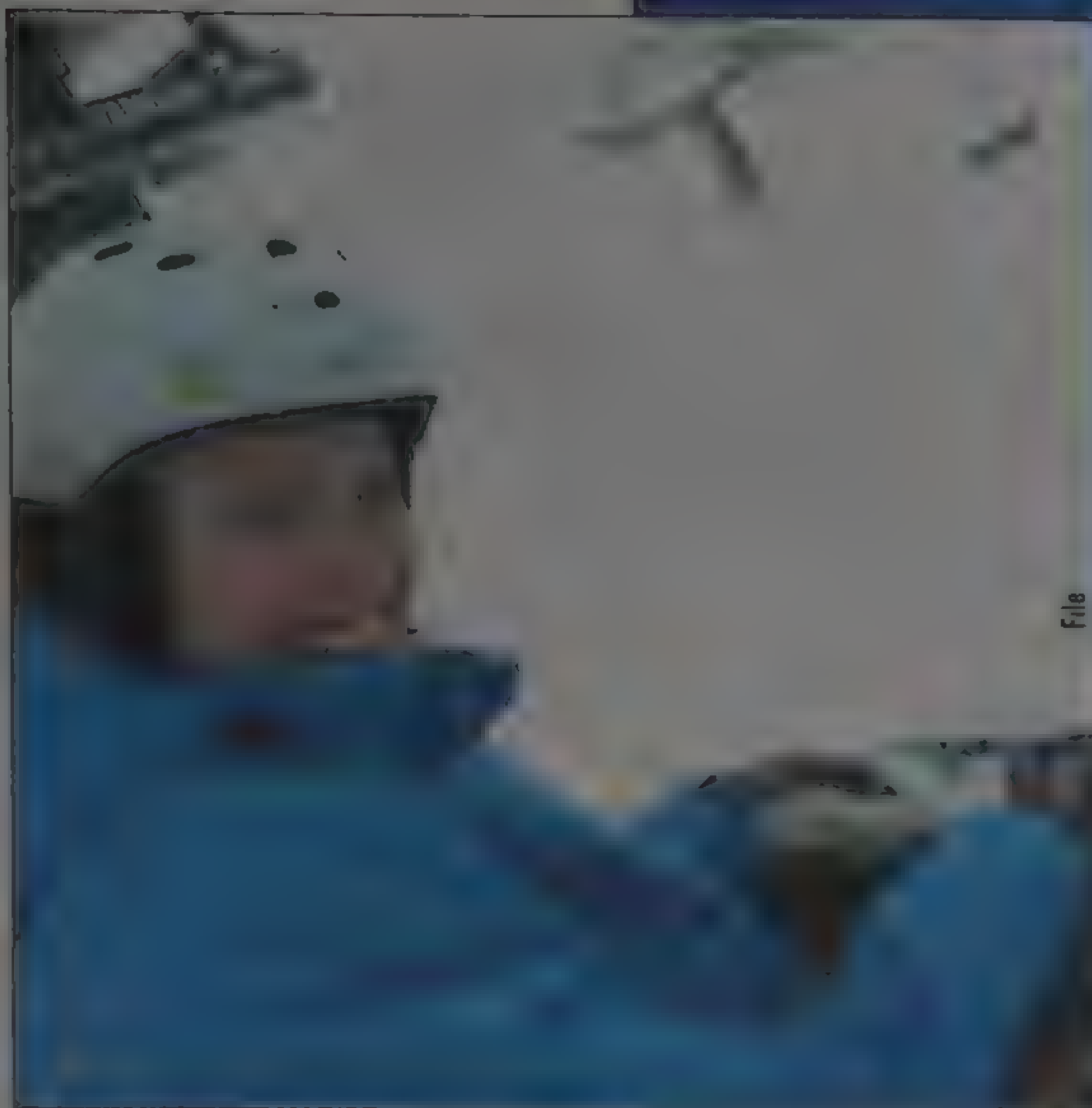
At the beginning of this season I decided to pack away my skis and become a snowboarder. Call me crazy for making the change this late in the game but I was determined. It was a challenging feat. Being new to the sport, I needed every last day available to me on a mountain to lock down my new skills. This was to be my third go at it and I was excited to

With another season winding down, you've got to make the most of those last few opportunities. And there's no better time than spring. As temperatures begin to make way for excellent riding.

"Mid March is generally when spring arrives on the mountain. During the daytime we can get highs up to 15°C in the valley and 5°C in the alpine," explains Jordan Petrovics, KHMR media relations and events manager. "But it all really depends from one year to the next."

But it was chilly heading up on the Catamount quad chairlift for the first time, and I was nervous. The first thing I would have to pull off was dismounting the chair without disaster. I should have this figured out by now, right? To my pleasant surprise, I succeed.

With a smooth dismount, I turn my attention to how I look on the hill. As a new rider, I haven't invested in my own gear yet and I've been counting on rentals. This is the first time that I don't feel like an obvious noob, thanks to a plain black board and



RIDE KICKING HORSE

alien-like helmet. KHMR had hooked me up with some solid Burton gear—stuff that I might even be proud to call my own. It was a huge confidence boost and it was nice to blend in with the rest of the seasoned riders

ALTHOUGH THE WEEKEND weather is pretty dreary for my visit, Golden is known for being one sunny little mountain town.

"Since we are very close to the time zone change from Mountain to Pacific Time, our sunset in the plaza is around 6 pm. Meanwhile up at the



Eagle's Eye the sun doesn't normally duck behind the peaks until about 7:30 or 8 pm," Petrovics explains

This is why the best reward after a day of hard riding is certainly the exceptional three-course sunset dinner at the award winning Eagle's Eye restaurant—probably one of the best meals I've ever had, which included duck, venison and a martini made with ice wine. The restaurant sits at the top of the gondola at 7700 feet, making it the highest place to eat in western Canada. A little higher than that, at 8033 feet, is the highest point in the controlled recreation area.

Spring also brings the Sun Splash

Funk Fest which takes centre stage April 10 - 12. I want to learn more about the sun pits created in Golden, but their story seems to be a closely guarded secret. Petrovics is reluctant to divulge much, saying only, "the sun pit is an area that the locals usually hang out in to take in some sun and enjoy the view. This is an area we really do not promote or host anything formal at."

Frustrated in my attempt to infiltrate the local pit, I think, "Who needs a sun pit anyway when the riding is good?" With the season rapidly drawing to a close, you've got to get to that sweet powder while you still can

My experience in Kicking Horse totally turns things around for me. I'm still falling a bit as I make my way down the hill, but nothing serious anymore. In fact, most of the time when I'm falling it's because I'm being more adventurous, trying to pull off harder moves and get even better. Now that's how you want to finish a season

Looking towards the sunny horizon, spring signifies new life, change and growth. I'm proud of my accomplishments. However, standing in the plaza and breathing in the scent of the smoky wood from the fire pit, I already can't wait for next winter. ▼

NHL Stars Skate in Jasper

FALL LINES

Others say your perfect fall lines feature a mix of scenic views, sports, good food, charity and a really good time. This weekend, April 3 - 5, numerous NHL legends are descending on Jasper as part of a charity fundraiser for Jasper Minor Sports, MS Society, Juvenile Diabetes Association and the Spinal Chord Research Association. Notable participants include Dale Hawerchuk, Bryan Trottier, Billy Smith and ex-Oiler Dave Semenko. In total there are 14 legends, all except for Superbowl MVP Mark Rypien, an avid golfer, I know, but it could be interesting seeing him strap on the blades.

The schedule calls for two exhibition games against the Jasper/Hinton All-Stars comprised of selected players from the

Jasper Wolves and Hinton Heat Senior A hockey teams. I hope they have a good scouting report on the perils of gliding through Billy Smith's crease. First you get wacked by Smith and then Semenko gives you a tune-up for disturbing the goalie.

These games are scheduled for Friday night and Sunday afternoon. Like most of these charity hockey events, I'm sure the officiating will be really special as well. The big event of the weekend is the gala dinner on Saturday night at the Jasper Activity Centre. It's only \$50 per ticket and you'll get a chance to meet all of the participants and take part in an auction of notable memorabilia. Maybe you can talk/buy Semenko into a trip down the slopes of Marmot Basin. For you card collectors there'll be some displays and booths set up as well. If you have any questions, just drop in on Brett Ireland at the Jasper Brewing Company. This is only a guess but I'm sure these guys know where to find a good beer or two. ▼

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CAT SKIING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

ing is mostly reserved for the rich; touring, though arguably gratifying and pure, is arduous and requires strong backcountry knowledge; snowmobiling is even more dangerous and requires a lot of time and equipment.

Therefore, by my math, nothing beats cat skiing for value. Of the more than 20 cat-ski operators in Western Canada, the price ranges from \$300 to \$700 per person, per day, depending on the operator and the area.

Cat skiing is beneficial in other ways as well. One, as I discovered, is the people. Cat skiers are comprised of riders that snort snow instead of blow, the type of people who miss shoveling their driveway when they go on tropical vacations.

I have never ridden harder than with the 12 powderhounds in that cat. There was the owner of a ski tour operator and his buddy, a marketing director for Kimberley and nine other winter sport

professionals. Combined, there was over a century of riding experience.

LOCATED 20 MINUTES out of Fernie, **Fernie Wilderness Adventures** (ferniewildernessadventures.com) is one of the more accessible operators, with prices ranging from \$350 per day to more expensive, all-inclusive packages. They have over 3000 acres of skiable terrain with an elevation of 2170 metres.

With such a large leasehold it's amazing FWA only takes out a maximum of three cats per day each with 12 - 14 passengers. All the cats are in constant communication with each other in order to ensure your group doesn't see other groups, until the end of the day when everyone meets down at the base lodge for some hot soup and great tales. FWA provides all necessary avigear, bagged lunches, professional photographers and professional guides. In short, backcountry turns with resort like safety and comfort.

Our guide was laidback, immediately getting a great feel for the ability of the group. For our first run, he

led us off the ridge to a regroup spot just above a snowghost glade. He laid out the plan, what we could expect, and where to regroup again. "Most importantly, though, enjoy your turns," he said.

My riding partner, James, and I skied our way to the front of the pack, came over the roller, and descended into a section of trees spaced by God. The snow was forgiving like knee-deep pow, yet responsive like fresh groomed piste. Even the tightest lines could be sniped at full-speed.

At a resort I would be stopping after every line in order to survey the next section; not the case here. I felt so greedy, never stopping to find the best line because every line was the best line. "Speed check" was erased from my vocabulary as James and I linked the best turns of our riding existence.

We regrouped at the end of the glade where the trees yielded to a vast cut block of untracked powder-field perfection. The guide had difficulty getting a word in over the sounds of guttural elation and paradoxical prayers like, "Holy shit, thank you God!"

"That was good," he said through his perpetual Cheshire grin. "We're gonna head through this cut block here and meet the cat down at the road. Just try not to hit any saplings—other than that let's enjoy the rest of our run."

Then he led us through the minefield of joy. Snow exploded from our edges. When we finally got to the road, everyone was silent and glowing. Had that been our last run, we could have finished satisfied, but we still had two full days of catharsis.

OVER THE TWO DAYS, we rode some incredibly varied runs. At one point the photographer set up shop underneath a mellow 15 - 20 footer. All she captured, however, was bail reels as nobody took their launch serious enough to stick a landing.

There were some more rewarding and lengthy runs as well combining tight trees with long steep alleyways of snow. Some alleys were so long you could park an aircraft carrier; others were so steep you could bunny hop 15 - 20 feet over a cushy roller.

One of our better runs began atop the leasehold's summit and dropped down to the crest of a freshly broken slab. We didn't quite get far enough over to miss the slab, and had to traverse along the top of the slide. The slab was well over a metre deep and given the length of time we traversed it must have been a few football fields wide. It was a frightening thought, but easily shrugged off by the confidence and easy-going nature of our guides.

We came back to that ridge on our second day. The clouds had blown away long enough to get a good view of the valley. Adjacent, and a bit north, we could see Fernie Alpine resort, along with its seething lift lines, a mass of people all desperate to find some non-existent freshies. And there we were, lazily clicking into our gear knowing we didn't need to work and clamor. The snow was there, eager to be ridden.

I've seen those turns countless times in ski films. Until that day I never believed they existed. ▼

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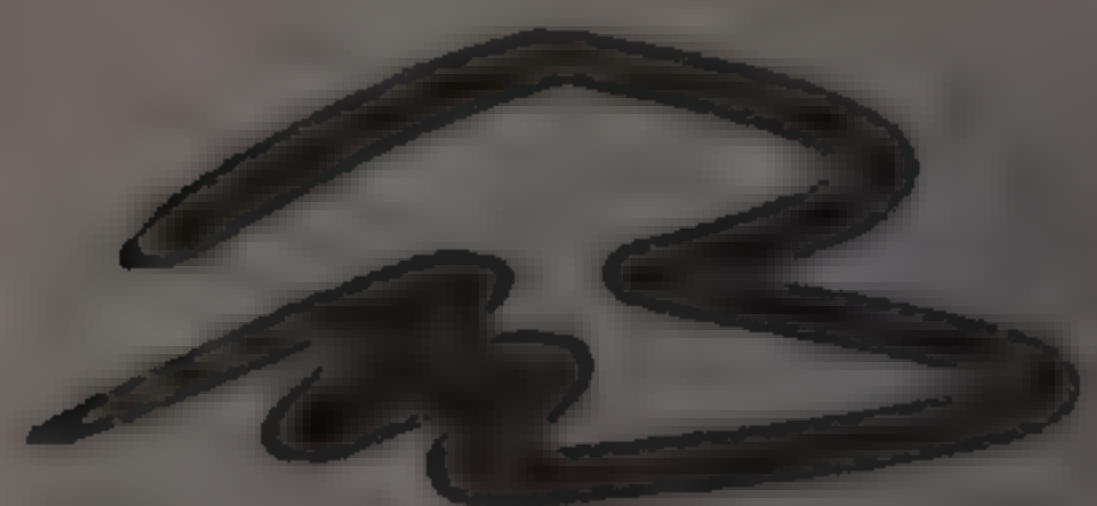
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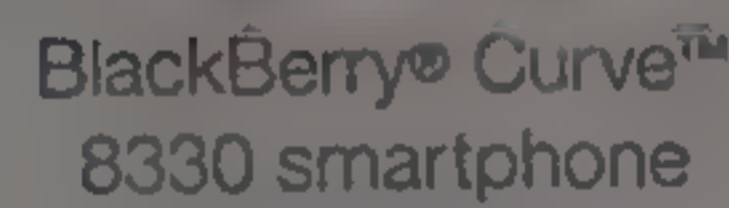
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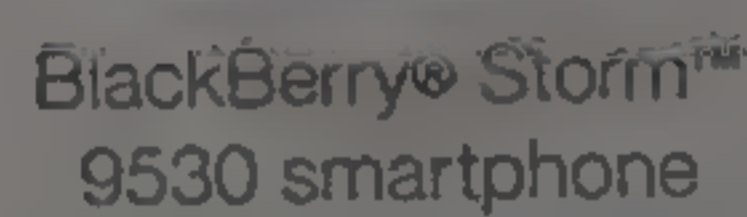
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Vision

Art direction

Stanton, Langevin offer different inroads to art at SNAP

BY ADAM WALDRON-BLAIN / adamwb@vueweekly.com

Guy Langevin's *Scent of Memory* and Jill Stanton's *Many Things Are Better When Handmade*, showing at SNAP until April 11, address the role of the artist as interpreter and curator of his or her own work in very different ways.

Guy Langevin's prints each explore ephemerality of visual memory using a deep, printerly chiaroscuro effect, contrasting light and dark, produced by a drypoint and mezzotint process. Within each work is a nude, so blurred the form is almost unrecognizable except for one aspect, whether it's the torso, the head or an arm.

Langevin relies on this deep chiaroscuro to give his works the sense of the hazy disconnects between our memories and the original event. In "Tomber les voiles," we see the top of the head of a woman bending down. The print is small and personal, and though the rest of her body is obscured, there is the distinct sense that you are intruding on a personal memory. There is an inherent sweetness in this; the softness of the images suggests a careful, intimate portrait.

"Caratide," though smaller, reflects a more kinetic approach to Langevin's work. The sense of intimacy is gone, and replaced with an Eadweard Muybridge-like fascination with motion and optics. "Caratide" is a woman circling her arms down; her motion, too quick for the eye to catch, turns her arms into a blur. The result is both symmetrical and luminescent prints.

Langevin's work has the potential to be visually captivating, but presents itself in a very formal manner, which leaves a feeling of being both mystified and disappointed. Langevin privileges his audience, inviting them into an intimate story, complicated by time and sentiment, but instead of telling the story, giving the audience his insight into time and memory, he focuses on his process. The qualities of the work are deep and layered, but after a few images become repetitive.

ALONGSIDE LANGEVIN'S WORK is Jill Stanton's exhibition *Many Things are Better When Hand Made*, a series of prints based on a series of pamphlets Stanton made. The images from the pamphlet have been turned into prints of the specifically better hand-



"Crepusculo de diu," Guy Langevin

VIZ ARTS

UNTIL SAT, APR 11
SCENT OF MEMORY
WORKS BY GUY LANGEVIN

MANY THINGS ARE BETTER WHEN HANDMADE
WORKS BY JILL STANTON

SNAP GALLERY (10309 - 97 ST)

made article, such as gifts, scarves, fresh herbs, pancakes and cookies.

Stanton's crests are mixed media, a combination of paper, transparency and collage that give the works depth and animation much different from the depth and movement found in Langevin's work. Stanton's graphic style is punctuated effectively by her sparing use of colour and her incorporation of archival images. These are crests for a new century; part Gwen Stefani, part hip hop, part Scottish revival and Urban Outfitters outcast. Stanton has a keen awareness of her cultural surroundings, complete with its ostentatious taste and penchant for ironic design.

Stanton also displays the pamphlets the exhibition is based on. These pamphlets are hand-printed visual guides to eating better, living greener and things which are better handmade. The inside of each pamphlet features busy image collages of all the actions you can take to accomplish the title goal. Notably, on the back of each pamphlet, Stanton

points out that these are merely suggestions, and encourages self-directed research. Stanton pulls back from giving too much direction, but realizes the balance between formal and cultural interpretations much more vividly than Langevin.

Stanton's pamphlets and crests, approached with a fervent altruism, are an exercise in DIY culture. Artists are frequently turned to for images but not content; by producing her own brochures, Stanton has control of all aspects of their production, however, by limiting the production, she still elevates the brochure to the level of the art object—this may be a manifesto for better living, but there are only 20 copies, so access to these ideas are limited and privileged.

Langevin's work is much different from Stanton's, so much so that they draw very few points of comparison between them. I think, however, both exhibitions question the amount of say the artist should have in the direction and interpretation of their work. Langevin seems content to open his work up to broad and varied criticism, whereas Stanton is very direct about the path she wants her audience to travel when viewing her work. Walking between the two exhibitions is like pacing along a magnet; Stanton's idealism is attractive and forceful, whereas Langevin's work, not repelling, rather lets the viewer hover over the art without a single solid idea to ground the works. ▽



No shades of grey

Liz Miller's *Cataclysmic Rescue Mission* is bold, but not much else

ADAM WALDRON-BLAIN / adamwb@vueweekly.com

As you enter the Harcourt House main gallery, Liz Miller's *Cataclysmic Rescue Mission* presents a bold first impression. The space has been a popular target for attempts at this kind of installation, which specifically calls to mind Stephanie Jonsson's recent show there. Miller is more successful than many in her attempt to transform both the space and her mundane, crafty materials into something beautiful. Miller quite capably makes use of the room, and for once Harcourt House's underfunded flooring can almost be forgotten. But after this initial success, *Cataclysmic Rescue Mission* doesn't seem to know exactly where to go, and the colourful beauty of the installation is ultimately unfulfilled.

The installation is constructed from various household craft supplies: foam, felt and paper. Miller clearly has a strong interest in transforming her materials, and by and large she is successful. As one looks closely at the installation some of the magic falls away, victim to awkward creases or uninspiring foam, but the initial impression is undeniable, and the work is certainly alive with a strong sense of movement. From the smaller front gallery, the colours and shapes are appealing even when visible only as a glimpse, and there is a sense of excitement to being in the room with them. She seems shy about her references, however: the colour palette is strong and her nods to computer graphics come through strongly, coupled with the plainly cataclysmic nature of the wild forms and a few rocket-like cut-outs, and there is an architectural element, but there is not much more than that.

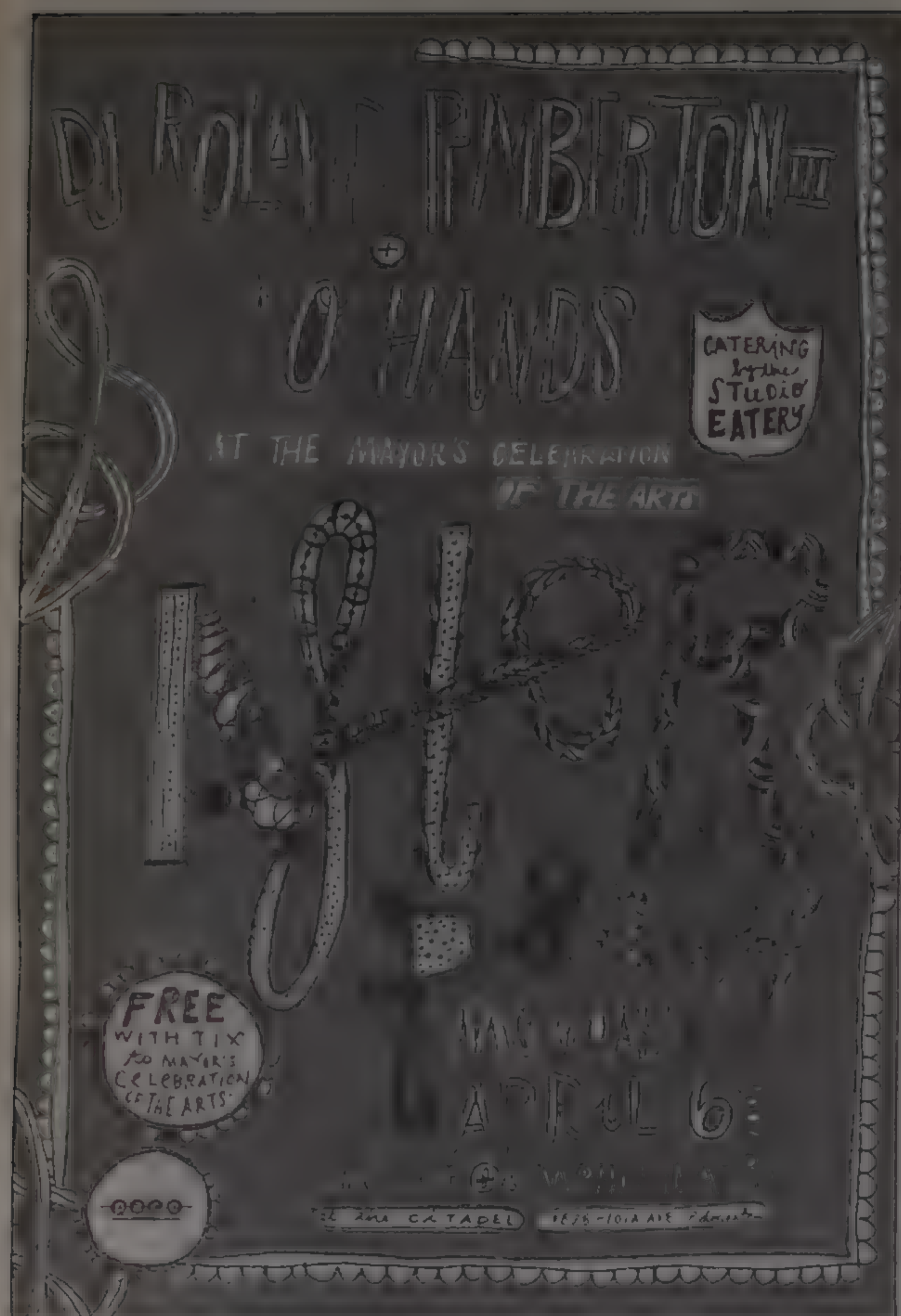
MILLER'S WORK is certainly of the

VIZ ARTS

UNTIL SAT, APR 25
CATACLYSMIC RESCUE MISSION
WORKS BY LIZ MILLER
HARCOURT HOUSE (10215 - 112 ST)

moment, and it calls to mind other art which, even if it is not shown in places like Edmonton, is easily found online. Miller's interest in destruction and joyful, technicolor violence, her references to computer graphics and her wild installation is essentially the aesthetic that has been termed "new rave" in the music press, to much argument, and it's found in the work of other artists like Assume Vivid Astro Focus.

But it is most successful when it is braver: although Miller is clearly unafraid to make bold aesthetic gestures with her materials, she seems to lack vocabulary both in her work and in her statement. Where AVAF candidly talk about demolition and transgression/transgender, echoed in Miller's hybrids and explosions, she resorts to a simple catch-all about failure and possibility and how complicated the world is, and we see this in the work. For all of the excitement, vibrancy and movement in *Cataclysmic Rescue Mission*, the transformed materials and exhibition space are just a collection of colours and shapes, hardly exciting new terrain for a young artist like Miller. The post-rave psychedelia and digital images that form her subject matter have plenty of theory behind them, and Miller's work could only benefit from a closer reading and exploration of that material. In the meantime, if she just stops saying hybrid and starts saying cyborg, she'll be half way there. ▽



Stylized to death

Studio's *Roberto Zucco* awes, though it doesn't affect

DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

Whatever the darkest corners of our souls might be, it's hard for us to empathize with serial killers. That may be particularly true of one like Roberto Zucco, who gives his name and life story to Bernard Marie Koltès' play currently showing at Studio: after strangling his mother and father, Zucco broke out of prison and went on a rampage that got him declared public enemy number one, robbing, raping and killing his way across four different countries.

It's to the credit of Koltès that he attempts to humanize such a man, trying to explain without endorsing the actions of a man very truly on the fringes of humanity. And yet Stefan Dzeperoski's production fails precisely because by the time the curtain drops, we are as alienated from Zucco as ever: by emphasizing production style and a heady exploration of themes—mostly about the killer in relation to so-called "normal" society—Dzeperoski leaves us as cold as his killer seems to be. Rather than coming to understand him, it feels as though we're watching a stylized essay, its violence and characters little more than art-directed arguments.

THAT SAID, if you're going to stylize something, you could do far worse than designer Robert Shannon has done here. Taking place in front of a flexible, white canvas structure that



UNTIL SAT. APR 4
ROBERTO ZUCCO
DIRECTED BY STEFAN DZEPEROSKI
WRITTEN BY BERNARD MARIE KOLTÈS
STARRING THE CAST OF 2008
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shifts seamlessly between fortified prison, family home and derelict slum, while also frequently serving as screen for some striking video projections, the play looks gorgeous. But, while it wouldn't be fair to call it style over substance, it nonetheless is as removed as the rest of Dzeperoski's direction: again, this is design with its eye solely towards idea, treating the human drama that's unfolding before

it like set pieces to be moved when it's time to prove another point.

The acting here is probably the weakest it's been an Studio all year, though it's hard to find fault with the actors. Vincent Forcier stands out as the titular cold killer, but this is partly because his characterization fits closest with the play's ethos; the other actors fight to come through the design with varying degrees of aplomb, without any really succeeding.

Ultimately, *Roberto Zucco* doesn't add much to what we already feel when he think of a serial killer: a vague degree of interest over something we don't normally see, but not very much we can relate to. ▽

Moving on from Montréal

ART **PRAIRIE ARTSTERS**
(MONTREAL)
amy@vueweekly.com

For as long as I can remember, since trolling around on the inefficient Edmonton public transit system from nowhere north side to dead end west end as a preteen, since brooding year after year about remaining in Edmonton for another year, I too had always harboured the urge to leave. And not leave to just anywhere in particular, but specifically, I, along with legions before and after me, wanted desperately to move to Montréal.

La belle ville! Where you can seemingly live cheaply and freely forever. Where you can't spit without hitting an artist. Where you can ride your bicycle everywhere and partake in an array of everything any day and any night of any week.

The years went by and I never did leave. At least not for Montréal. Never finding the pull strong enough or the push great enough, I ended up back where I started to try again.

But since those early days of dirt city angst, I have watched legions come, leave, return and leave again, perpetuating a rhythmic tugging cycle.

Last week, I finally dropped into Mon-

tréal on a research visit to witness Studio 303's Edgy Women Festival. The curation of multidisciplinary performance works by Miriam Ginestier was certainly inspiring in scope and variety, with highlights including choreography from Chanti Wadge as performed by Isabelle Poirier, bittersweet performance artist Jess Dobkin, the always electric eclection Alexis O'Hara, plus Edmonton's own Kristine Nutting's scaled-down remount of *Pig*. The 100-capacity theatre at Tangente was packed each night, and Nutting's show brought out one ex-Edmontonian after another, who came out to see her Prairie gothic performance in Montréal. As the only Canadian artist representing west of Toronto, Nutting reaffirmed for me that our fetishization of elsewhere neglects to acknowledge what we already have brewing in our own backyard.

Working in a city like Edmonton demands infinitely more self-directed focus, and the trade-off is more process time for those who are committed. There is less of an expectation to persistently churn out more work; in fact, it has become clear that you can only viably create one or two works a year, in whatever medium you work in.

CHECKING OUT the visual arts scene during

the day and touring the endless galleries in the Belgo building, hitting the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, DHC/ART, La Galerie Centrale and other spots, it proved that within Canada more does not equal better. The ratio of quality work to unprocessed works remains level in proportion, and so the result is seeing a ton of bad art with a few gems, most of which was created by artists from elsewhere.

You really can't walk without tripping over an artist of some sort, and most likely they're riding their bicycle to one of the many free or affordable cultural events that everyone from all ages seems to attend in passionate droves. Everyone is creative, almost all of the time; but there, like here, like most everywhere, is a vacuum unto itself. That vacuum is important for generating works specific and conscious of their environment and communities, as that becomes the cultural hallmark of any place; but for those who choose to stay and create, they need to be nourished, and that means growing both the work and the audience by injecting new and challenging works alongside the existing status quo instead of simply defaulting to elsewhere. ▽

Amy Fung is the editor of *PrairieArtsters.com*

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ARTS PREVIEWS

DEATHTRAP

DIRECTED BY RICHARD WINNICK

WRITTEN BY IRA LEVIN

STARRING NORM USISKIN, TANYA LAWRENCE

THU, APR 2 - SAT, APR 11

WALTERDALE PLAYHOUSE (10322-83 AVE), \$12 - \$16

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vuwweekly.com

There's at least one Sterling award category they don't give out anymore: Outstanding Amateur Production. That coveted statue existed in the first few years of the awards but probably vanished as the Sterling criteria solidified to "Productions must be professional in nature." But back in 1988, when they *did* give that one away, Richard Winnick's production of comedy-thriller *Deathtrap* took it home, and 20 years later he's directing the show again for the Walterdale's 50th anniversary.

"I probably appreciate the writing more [now], having worked on many scripts since then," Winnick explains over the phone. "It's been a good script to revisit because it's so well-written and it's such an interesting twist-and-turn type of murder mystery. It's not like doing a show that might've been a little more superficial one more time again."

Deathtrap, written by

heavyweight Ira Levin, finds once-popular playwright Sidney Bruhl stuck in a slump of writing only flops. He sees his opportunity to get back to the top, however, when a younger playwright brings him a brilliant script, and Bruhl orchestrates a plan to kill the guy under the guise of helping him revise his work. Of course, it's not that easy. In '88, it was Winnick's second production with the Walterdale playhouse.

Since the original production, Winnick took over as the Walterdale's Artistic Director, though he currently sits as the AD for Spruce Grove's Horizon Players. Revisiting his Walterdale hit seems to be a pleasant glance in the rearview mirror.

Winnick's particularly satisfied with how his new set is coming together—in particular, Winnick notes the new design for Bruhl's weapon collection—and the way he talks about all of *Deathtrap*'s little nuances hints at the mileage he's still getting out of the script on go-around number two.

"Some of it is, 'My god, how did we get through it before?'" he says. "I've directed about 60 productions since then, including 15-20 musicals. So looking back, it's how much of what you didn't know, and how much more you've learned."

DIASPORAMA

FEATURING WORKS BY ANDRÉ GINGRAS, LUC DUNBERRY

PRESENTED BY PPS DANSE

WED, APR 8 & THU, APR 9 (8 PM)

TIMMS CENTRE (112 ST & 87 AVE), \$15 - \$25

FAWNDA MITHRUSH / fawnda@vuwweekly.com

"Don't be surprised if you wake up one day and there's no one to dance or make paintings for you," says André Gingras over the line from Bielefeld, Ger-

many. The comment comes from the Hamilton-born choreographer as he's discussing funding cuts and expatriate trends in Canadian arts communities of late. It's not that he's a bitter guy—his words mix a little tongue-in-cheek with a hint of foreboding—but he does acknowledge a certain anger permeating the arts community, a rage that is reflected in the work he created for *Diasporama*, a program of duets compiled by Montréal's PPS Danse. Created by invited expatriate Canadian artists (think a combination of "diaspora" and "diorama"), the program features Pierre-Paul Savoie dancing two roles in choreographies by Gingras and Montréal expat Luc Dunberry.

"It's funny, my work very often does have a political smell to it," Gingras admits. "For me this piece is a response to the last eight years of the American administration. I think in general there's an anger in Canada, not only being the neighbour of George Bush but also with the Harper government and the incredible cuts in arts funding, there is kind of a sim-

mering in the field about how the arts have been more or less dismantled over the last years. So yeah, it makes me angry somehow, and that fed into the work and into looking back at that period in the '80s."

Gingras' choreography, "... and the air felt like it would burst into flames,"

is heavily influenced by the writings of David Wojnarowicz. For those unfamiliar with the seminal New York artist's work, let's say seething rage, violence and humour are all things you can expect to see.

"I've been reading his work for many years," Gingras says of Wojnarowicz. "For me his writing in particular embodies this anger towards the Reagan administration that was prevalent at the time."

As in Wojnarowicz's time, when artists who identified as queer or who struggled with AIDS focused their works on the fight against being swept under the socio-political carpet, Gingras' piece consists of two dancers with very distinct responses to the individual's plight to be recognized in societies where art, or artists, are undervalued.

"This work is co-authored by the performers who helped me develop it," Gingras explains. "Pierre-Paul [Savoie] at the time was 53 years old and Vincent Morelle was 23. Their specific responses to this idea of anger or rage manifests in very different ways. Pierre-Paul, because he has a great intelligence and humour but also a great fragility and sense of irony, his character develops in a more sinister direction, while the younger dancer [now performed by Lael Stellick] is this big, strong, young guy who could break you with his hands if he wanted to, so that translates into the character's physical material, being far more athletic and acrobatic."

"It's quite violent material, but there's a lot of humour in it as well," Gingras explains. "Rage is only one colour so you have to look at it on a broader level. We are ridiculous of course, when we're angry: look at the rage of a child, of a lover. As we manifest that anger we are frightening, but as human beings we have a multitude of colours." ▽



ESTIMAP

Damme it all

Jean-Claude bears his soul in *JCVD*

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vueweekly.com

What is surely the world's first major meta-martial arts movie opens with a bravura tracking shot that forces Jean-Claude Van Damme, portrayed by Jean-Claude Van Damme, to kick, punch and jab his way through dozens of anonymous opponents to some vintage Curtis Mayfield soul. The sequence just goes on and on, rather hilariously, until Van Damme begins to run out of steam, he misses a mark, and the whole thing literally collapses. "I'm 47!" he protests with affecting vulnerability to the frustrated crew. "Just because he brought John Woo to Hollywood doesn't mean he can rub my dick with sandpaper," the rather unforgiving punk of a director mumbles to his AD. A sort of companion piece to *The Wrestler*, but way goofier, *JCVD* gives us a fading action star waxing reflective on his own anxieties over struggling to keep up with the action.

Reeling from divorce and child custody suits, amassing vast debt, tiring, both physically and spiritually, of headlining an endless string of actioners that are virtual remakes of the same thing over and over, the Muscles from Brussels returns home to

COMEDY

FRI, APR 3, SUN, APR 5 & TUE, APR 7 (7 PM)
SAT, APR 4 & MON, APR 6 (9 PM)

JCVD

DIRECTED BY MABROUK EL MECHRI
WRITTEN BY FRÉDÉRIC BENOÏS, EL MECHRI,
CHRISTOPHE YVES
STARRING JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME
SHIRLEY BURLIN (1978 - 1979)

★★★★

lick his wounds and settle some business. But life will soon imitate art, and weirdly. It starts, aptly enough, in a sleepy video club that will soon be crammed with cops, some of whom wear only their underpants. They're responding to one of the most memorable radioed-in cries for help in recent memory: "Please. Hurry. Jean-Claude Van Damme is robbing a post office!"

IT APPEARS Van Damme's gone postal, though the truth is more complicated, involving hostages, many layers of theatre, meditations on the social duties of celebrities, a really bad and quite annoying bad guy with John Cazale's haircut from *Dog Day Afternoon* and a humiliating courtroom scene where a prosecuting attorney slaps down DVDs and rattles



off the countless ways Van Damme has meted out death upon fictive victims for the last two decades. As helmed by Mabrouk El Mechri, *JCVD* is pitched somewhere between Jean-Luc Godard, Charlie Kaufman, a midnight movie and a cartoon. He bathes the whole thing in this bizarre, ugly, sort of bronzing ethereal haze that's perhaps meant to resemble what the world looks like after 18 consecutive hours in a tanning bed. Like the enjoyably throwback score, the Dutch

angles or the long takes which frequently fix solely on Van Damme's face even during a conversation, it's one of many choices that render *JCVD* stylishly stoned and indiscriminate. But it's never less than watchable and utterly diverting.

What grounds all this at all is obviously Van Damme himself, who seems to be genuinely laying his heart bare, slumped in chairs complaining about shit scripts, signing autographs and posing for pics, doing a few high

kicks and flipping out when he can't make a simple bank transaction. The movie's key scene has Van Damme drift out of the action altogether for a few minutes, floating up to the ceiling like the hero of Donald Antrim's *The Verificationist*, delivering this rambling semi-coherent, Brando-esque monologue about fame, drugs, women and whatever else haunts the tired mind of a Belgian kickboxing movie star. In some parallel universe, it just won him the Oscar. ▀

¡El horror! ¡El horror!

FLICKS

DVDETECTIVE

JOSEF BRAUN
dvdetective@vueweekly.com

It is the province of smarter science fiction makers to invest as deep if not an even deeper sense of wonder in the simplest, most familiar apparatus as they would the monolithic machines of elaborate fantasy. In *Timecrimes* (*Los Cronocriminales*), a pair of binoculars becomes just such a vessel of intrigue. When Héctor (Karra Elejalde), having recently moved into his country house with his wife Clara (Candela Fernández), begins to explore the peripheries of his property with his binoculars, it is as though the bizarre, mind-boggling journey he will soon set upon has already begun. And of course, it has already begun.

The mysterious phone call, the sight of a pretty girl undressing in the woods, the upturned dumpster and abandoned bike

by the side of the road, the mute, scissors-wielding maniac whose face is obscured by a pink bandage: all of these items which pull us so deftly into this story are luring the curious, casually voyeuristic Héctor into a trap whose genesis will prove unusually elusive, even by the standards of more synapse-sparking sci-fi. The chain of causality in Héctor's spiral into misfortune, injury and alienation from his own existence remains to the very end impossible to trace back—though god knows Héctor himself tries arduously to figure it out.

Before I confuse you too much, let me clarify that *Timecrimes* is, as you might guess, a movie about time travel. But rather than hurl its protagonist centuries into the past or eons into some far-flung future, Spanish writer/director Nacho Vigalondo's pretty ingenious and hugely sinister little feature debut tosses hapless Héctor a mere couple of hours back, which results in tremendous havoc. He catches sight of his own double doing everything

he did two hours ago. He's told by the mysterious lab technician (Vigalondo himself) who got him into this nightmare scenario, whose own motives are kept pretty obscure by the sweaty urgency of the story, not to interfere with what is, so to speak, destined to pass. So Héctor, clumsy, middle-aged, overweight and easily exhausted, must run around frantically setting up reenactments of things that haven't happened yet. Suffering from a persistent disconnect between seeing and being, he becomes tangled in a loop. The craziest part of it is that the avalanche of weird shit that got him into this mess is now rendered as echoes of their own internal continuum of events.

Newly out on DVD from Mongrel, *Timecrimes* is all action and often chillingly hilarious, a hybrid of an especially well-oiled episode of *The Twilight Zone* and some especially physically taxing silent comedy. It manages to stay compelling even when you can see exactly where it's going. Naysayers could make a case for

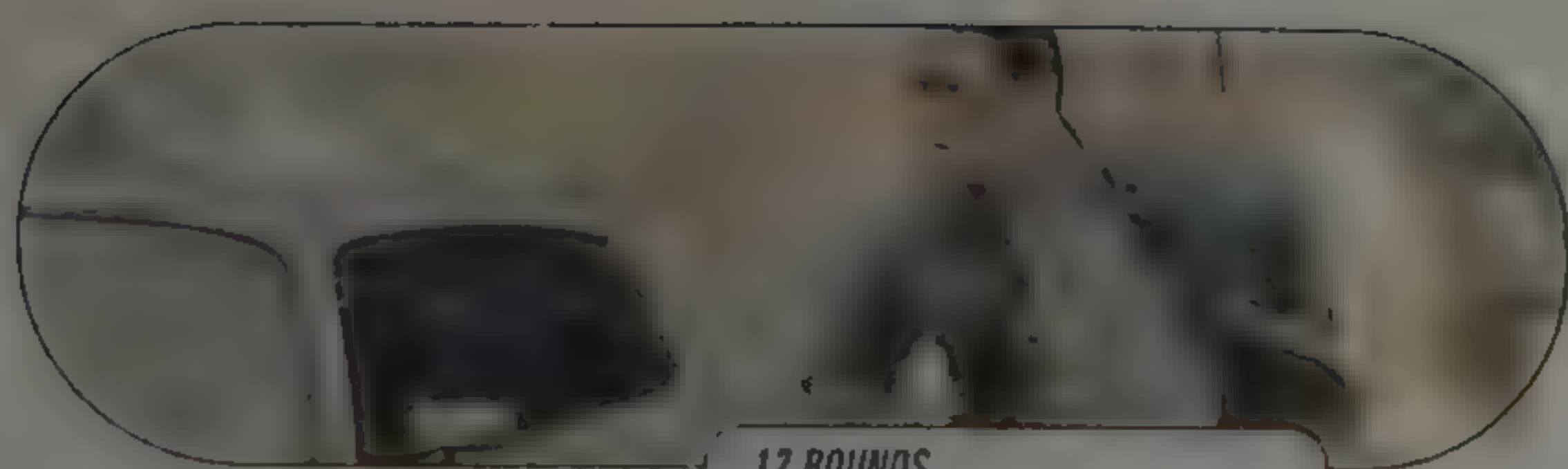
it's being a movie about little more than its own geometries. There's talk of an American remake, and with the right talent—Cronenberg has been rumoured—I could certainly see how Vigalondo's premise could be imbued with some darker layers of psychology. But you could just as easily laud the film for this very same sort of purity. It sets up an intricate network of activities that need to be fulfilled and deposits the utterly committed Elejalde into the thick of it like some poor, out-of-shape gerbil in some cosmically forbidding exercise wheel.

LIKE HÉCTOR, Quim (Leonardo Sbaraglia) is an errant Spaniard who stumbles into the wrong place at the wrong time and winds up caught in a stratagem whose design or purpose is obscure. *King of the Hill* (*El Rey de la montaña*) begins with Quim getting robbed by some hot young babe (Maria Valverde) in the washroom of Spain's most desolate gas station. At first it seems like he might be finding himself the antihero of some sexy, fatalistic rural neo-noir. He should be so lucky! By chasing after the girl and getting lost in some unpopulated mountain range, he's actually slipping into a rethink of *Deliverance* or *Duel*, the random-

ly selected mark of some unseen maniac hunter with a rifle, scope, pooch and predilection for tormenting his prey.

King of the Hill is out on the Dimension Extreme DVD imprint, though I'm not sure what's all that extreme about it save for a few particularly nasty-looking wounds. Directed by Gonzalo López-Gallego from a script by Javier Gullón, the film shares *Timecrimes'* unfussy, action-oriented rigour but lacks its wit. López-Gallego uses the bleak location well and cranks up tension with his insistence on tight shots that fragment the action and disorient the viewer at precisely those moments when we're grasping for some visual context. But while its simplicity can be read as a virtue, the film is so miserly with exposition that it risks long stretches given over to not much more than scrambling around, panting and crying out in pain and desperation and not much else. We do eventually get some hints at what sort of twisted creature has fixed Quim in its sights, but the little we do learn winds up feeling rather trite. Maybe it would have helped if Quim could have gone back in time and wound up with either John Boorman or Walter Hill in their 1970s prime as his puppet master. ▀

FILM CAPSULES



12 ROUNDS

OPENING THIS WEEK

ADVENTURELAND

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY GREG MOTTOLA
STARRING JAMES EISENBERG, KRISTEN STEWART
★★★

6/1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 / david@vuwweekly.com

Adventureland is a consummately weedy comedy, possessed of a gaunt, lanky, and a little bit of a Jew-fro and a comical, off-kilter wit that lends a touch of the ironic to everything he says that combine for the perfect embodiment of the intelligent youth beat down by a world that refuses to make sense of itself. It was a role he played to perfection in Noah Baumbach's aching *The Squid and the Whale*, grounding the arrogant, bitter Walt (a stand-in for Baumbach himself) with a very human vulnerability, his faults a kind of defence against the fact he didn't understand the world as much as his obvious intelligence would have him believe he did.

Eisenberg takes on a very similar role—even down to playing the stand-in for the writer/director's younger self—in Greg Mottola's *Adventureland*, a sweet, frequently hilarious little coming-of-age story that nevertheless shares more with Eisenberg's previous work on *Squid* than Mottola's previous work on *Superbad*, whatever the advertising or cast would have you believe. James (Eisenberg) is a painfully literate college grad forced by his dad's demotion to trade a summer in Europe for working at the eponymous low-rent amusement park. "They don't like people like me where I'm from," James whines to his haughty college friends, a fact confirmed almost immediately by a run-in with an old friend from elementary school who greets him by flipping him the bird and punching him in the balls, barely affectionate abuse taking the place of his college-worded debates.

It's not long, though, before James' impishness is broken down by the charm of his co-workers, if not necessarily the park, the kind of place where people will cheat and pull a knife just to win a giant-ass panda from the rigged games. Run by a sweet couple—a hilarious pairing of *SNL*'s Bill Hader and Kristen Wiig, whose utterly sincere love of the park is undeterred by spoiled corn dogs and litter bugs—and populated by a sarcastic Russian Lit major (the droll Martin Starr), a charming-if-mildly-amoral handyman (Ryan Reynolds, surprisingly good) and, of particular to James, the captivating Em (Kristen Stewart), an NYU student working there mostly to piss off her social-climbing hag of a stepmom.

Though *Adventureland* isn't light on laughs—Starr and Eisenberg's constantly-under-attack, barely contained sense of superiority provides a lot of the humour, nearly matched by Hader's pure commitment—its real strength is in the burgeoning relationship between James and Em. Equally as confused, if not inexperienced, about love, their relationship is captured beautifully by Mottola, tenderness and excitement played against hurt and frustration: there's an honest electricity to their first dip in a swimming pool, and a later scene where James discovers Em in a compromised posi-

tion is pure gut-punch, with an emotional rawness entirely nonexistent in comedies like *Superbad* and its spiritual brethren.

In the end, *Adventureland* is as much an honest portrait of our first adult steps as it is a ribald comedy, a tricky balance that puts it ahead of most examples of either

LOST SONG

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY RODRIGUE JEAN
STARRING PATRICK GOYETTE, SUZIE LEBLANC
SAT, APR 4, MON, APR 6 (7 PM); SUN, APR 5, TUE, APR 7 (9 PM)
METRO CINEMA (9820 - 101A AVE)
★★★★

DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com

Opening with a middle class family driving down a country highway, listening to opera and oblivious to the trials that are to come, the first film Rodrigue Jean's spare, spacious *Lost Song* recalls is Michael Haneke's *Funny Games*. But though Elisabeth (Suzie LeBlanc) and her husband Pierre (Patrick Goyette) will also be terrorized by a youth with no discernible motive, the similarities between the films end there: this young couple's tormentor is their own newborn, and Jean's far less interested in manipulating his audience, any discomfort that arises is natural as opposed to pointed.

The cracks in what seems like a rather idyllic time—Elisabeth and Pierre are headed out to his mother's cabin to give her some time to rest and get settled with their new child—appear early. Before they even arrive, Elisabeth is car sick, and the couple barely has time to set up the crib before they're arguing about where it should sleep, why it won't take to breastfeeding and their diminished sex life. From there, it's a matter of the two of them, though mostly Elisabeth, trying and failing to play the baby to at least a stalemate, finding a balance between the (presumably) happy life that came before and their new bundle of joy.

Though there is a pervading sense of

stillness, it really only serves to make the few moments that break through Elisabeth's quiet desperation particularly punctuated. Early on, even the way she shuts off the baby's lamp, practically ripping the cord from it, is shocking and foreboding, an effect that only heightens as the mood of *Lost Song* settles in: the frantic way she buys a pack of cigarettes or, particularly, a scene where Pierre almost forces sex on her—so desperate is he for some kind of physical affection with his wife, so disaffected is she she ends up letting him masturbate over her—feel as heightened and fierce as they must for her. It's this ability, to mimic the mood of its characters so ably, that ultimately makes *Lost Song* so gripping, even despite its deliberate pace.

SUNSHINE CLEANING

WRITTEN BY MEGAN HOLLEY
DIRECTED BY AMY ADAMS
STARRING AMY ADAMS, EMILY BLUNT, ALAN ARKIN
★★★

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuwweekly.com

It's indicative of the extent to which gallows humour has been absorbed, commoditized and made cozily "offbeat" by the movies when we see something as essentially unsullied by mortality as *Sunshine Cleaning* open with a shotgun suicide in an Albuquerque hardware store and almost immediately cut to gags about brain fragments staining the merchandise. The gruesome aftermath of death is incorporated right into screenwriter Megan Holley's premise, which finds two 30ish sisters entering the local crime-scene clean-up industry. This idea of two women whose own lives seem a mess hurling themselves into the grunt work of eliminating the traces of others' trauma, despair and resignation is a rich one, but don't let it fool you into thinking that *Little Miss Sunshine Cleaning*—the

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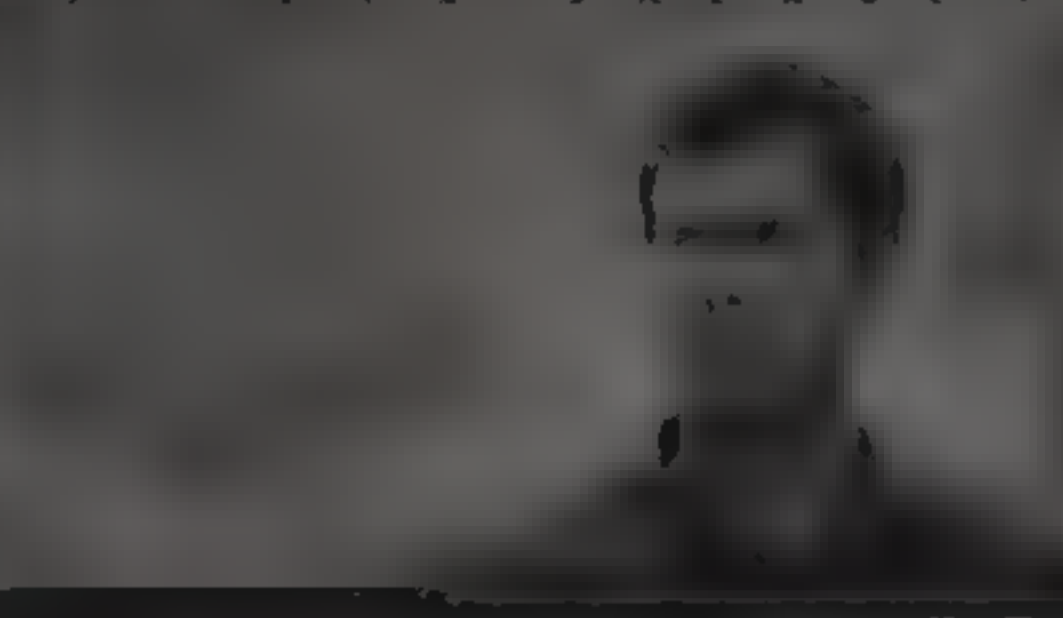


Adventureland

ADVENTURELAND
NIGHTLY - 8:30PM - SAT & SUNDAY MATINEES - 2:00PM
RATES: PG-13 (Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13)

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FILM CAPSULES

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

film shares more than just producers, "sunshine" and Alan Arkin with that 2006 indie hit—is any sort of comic trailblazer. It's got just enough quirk to seem an alternative to the most pedestrian mainstream fare, but the familiarity creeps in early, accumulating until the final act assumes the whiff of something cobbled directly from a screen-writing handbook.

Thank goodness for Amy Adams, whose frustrated single mom Rose offers the actress a welcome step toward playing a somewhat-less-innocent character. I say somewhat because Rose, the high school cheerleader who once dated Steve Zahn's football captain, now married with children and meeting for quickies in some fleabag called, I kid you not, the Crossroads Motel, is at times forced to behave naively just to help grease the gears of *Sunshine Cleaning's* rote trajectories of self discovery. Still, Adams is pretty delightful doing dirty things, and her desperation is at times truly touching.

Emily Blunt, who played the reluctant pal to Anne Hathaway in *The Devil Wears Prada*, gets to transgress more interestingly as Rose's sister Norah, who can't hold down a job, seems stuck in a pattern of adolescent rebelliousness and, in the movie's most intriguing subplot, stalks a woman, marvelously underplayed by Mary Lynn Rajskub, whose photos she finds stashed amidst the belongings of a suicide. But it's in this storyline that *Sunshine Cleaning* really reveals its limitations. The consequences of Norah's genuinely creepy perusal of a friendship—and perhaps more—with this introverted woman nearly

approach something resonant, yet Norah ends the movie by suddenly announcing she's going on a road trip, which reads as lazy screenwriter shorthand for "I'm going to find myself."

Director Christine Jeffs, who made the not uninteresting *Sylvia*, seems above all to be trying to remain anonymous, but the result is mostly just further emphasis on the movie's most un-engagingly generic qualities. None of this is to say you won't have a few laughs or feel a little empathy for *Sunshine Cleaning's* characters, but neither will their stories stick with you once the scouring is through. -

NOW PLAYING

12 ROUNDS

DIRECTED BY Renny Harlin

WRITTEN BY CONROY ANDRA

STARRING JOHN CENA, AIDAN GILLEN, ASHLEY SCOTT

★

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vueweekly.com

I love a big-dick action thriller as much as the next guy, especially when the dick in question is that of a cultural referent from a subculture with undeniable ties to the genre. WWE superstar John Cena takes another jab at big-screen heroism following his hardly successful turn in *The Marine*, this time as a New Orleans detective under pressure as a wronged prison escapee seeks revenge through a stupidly improbable cat-and-mouse game. Unlike his stirring, charming presence in the ring, Cena is, neither half-bad or really that good—it's a tough call to make when the movie most definitely sucks.

Danny Fisher (Cena) leaves for an evening shift as a police officer, only for him and his partner to find themselves smacked down in the middle of a pursuit for diamond thief Miles (Aidan Gillen) and his sexy girlfriend sidekick. Danny catches him but Miles' lady is killed in the chase, which has the bad guy claiming future vengeance. On the one-year anniversary of the incident, a promoted Danny gets a phone call from Miles, out of prison and after his adversary's common-law partner Molly, whom he kidnaps.

Danny's only hope for getting Molly back in one piece is Miles's elaborate city-wide game show, which involves 12 rounds of cracking codes and dismantling bombs across New Orleans. But is getting even Miles's only motive, or is this a scheme for something even more sinister?

12 Rounds is laughably conceived and poorly written, each round of Miles's challenge gets more ridiculous, only to be outdone by obvious dialogue. Countless lines either begin with "goddamn" or end in "bitch," likely aiming for the *Die Hard*-esque thrills of tough love one-liners but sounding like a softcore thriller. At first, hit-or-miss director Renny Harlin works with gritty but intimate camerawork and linear editing to salvage some credibility but

instead tears generous strips from *Speed*, *Seven*, and the train sequence in *Spider-man 2*. Cena shouldn't quit his day job.

FINN ON THE FLY

DIRECTED BY MARK JEAN

WRITTEN BY KELLIE ANN BENZ, MARK JEAN,

TEZA UNWIN, RICHARD SCOTT

STARRING MICHAEL KNIGHT, ANA GASTEYER

★★★

OMAN MOHAMMED / oman@vueweekly.com

Finn on the Fly is one of those "family" movies that children adore and parents despise. It's the kind that has parents in seats tuning out, ambivalent, checking the time on their cell phones and spending the bulk of the movie mentally calculating the costs of tickets, drinks and treats, the time spent to and from the theatre, not to mention the amount of "shit to do." But the kids—they will love it.

And why not? What kid wouldn't be delighted to imagine their pet dog as their human best friend? That's the premise of *Finn on the Fly*. Pre-teen Ben (Matthew Knight) has moved to America from Barcelona and, so far, the only friend he has is Finn, his dog. He's bullied by a red-headed fat boy, which leads me to ask why are all movie-bullies fat and red-headed? Not sure, but this one probably learned his malevolence from his mother, Dr Madsen, a mad scientist, played by *Saturday Night Live* ghost Ana Gasteyer.

Ben lives next door to the bully and evil scientist, often bearing witness to weirdness opposite his bedroom window. It's not until Finn gets into Dr Madsen's secret lab, and laps up some goo, that the scale of her evilness is understood. Finn undergoes serious changes; he turns into a fully grown adult male (Ryan Belleville) aged about 25 and with a social IQ of about the same number.

The transformation is conveniently timed for when cousin Eddie from Spain was supposed to visit. Real Eddie was detained at the airport, giving way to the blunder necessary for Ben to convince his parents that big Finn is cousin Eddie. He also teaches Finn how to speak English in an afternoon. Why the parents don't speak Spanish to cousin Eddie, or why they don't wonder where Finn the dog went, is never confronted. These are just two of several gaping plot holes that only a home-schooled child would ever notice.

For you kids—you who haven't quite grasped logic and fixate on the possibility of your best non-human pal finally turning human—*Finn on the Fly* is the movie for you. For the parents who are concerned about grown men licking their children's faces and camping out on their bedroom floors, you might want to follow up with a heart-to-heart talk about such dangers. In the meantime, the kids will appreciate this raucous film like it was served to them in a squeezable tube. ▽

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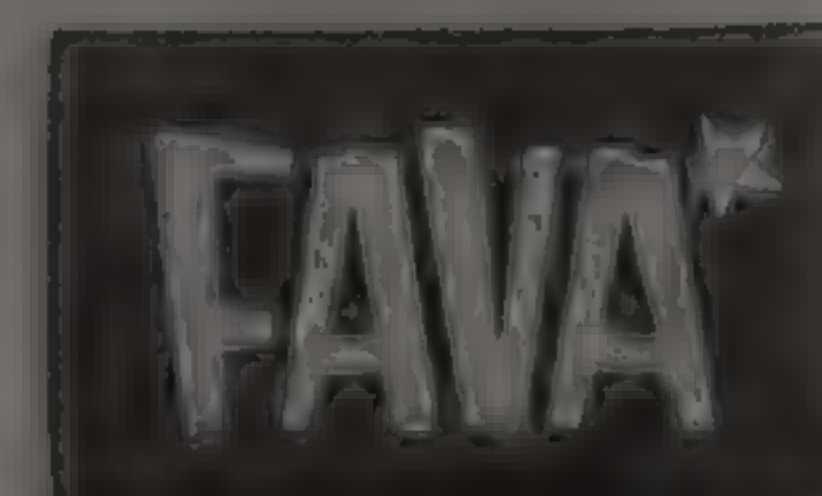
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CINEMA IN THE SUBURBS

Whitemud Crossing, 1211 106 St.
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REQUIEM (PG, mature themes)
Sun, Apr 5, 2:00; German with English subtitles

CINEMA AT THE CENTRE

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Wed, Apr 8, 6:30pm; French with English subtitles

CHABA THEATRE-JASPER

Rose Community Centre, 770-822-1739

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Fri-Sat 7:00, 9:00; Sun-Thru 8:00

FAST AND THE FURIOUS (14A)
Fri-Sat 7:00, 9:00; Sun-Thru 8:00

CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12

130 Ave. 50 St. 780.472.9779

AA DEKHEN ZARA (HINDI W.E.S.T.) (STC)
Daily 1:10, 4:05, 6:50, 9:30

STREET FIGHTER: THE LEGEND OF CHUN-LI (14A, violence)
Fri-Sat 2:00, 4:50, 7:35, 10:00; Sun-Thru 2:00, 4:50, 7:35, 10:00

THE PINK PANTHER 2 (PG)
Fri-Sat 1:55, 4:35, 7:05, 9:25, 11:30; Sun-Thru 1:55, 4:35, 7:05, 9:25

INKHEART (PG, frightening scenes)
Daily 1:45, 4:40, 7:10

UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS (18A, gory scenes)
Fri-Sat 1:50, 4:45, 7:30, 9:50, 12:05; Sun-Thru 1:50, 4:45, 7:30, 9:50

HOTEL FOR DOGS (G)
Fri-Sat 1:20, 4:30, 6:55, 9:15, 11:40; Sun-Thru 1:20, 4:30, 6:55, 9:15

BRIDE WARS (PG)
Fri 1:30, 4:15, 7:15, 9:20, 11:35; Sat 1:30, 4:15, 11:35; Sun-Thru 1:30, 4:15

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD (14A, coarse language, mature themes)
Daily 9:30

BEDTIME STORIES (G)
Fri 1:35, 4:25, 7:20, 9:40, 11:45; Sat 1:35, 4:25, 7:15, 9:20, 9:40, 11:45; Sun-Thru 1:35, 4:25, 7:15, 9:20, 9:40

MARLEY AND ME (PG)
Fri-Sat 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:35, 12:00; Sun-Thru 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:35

THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (PG, coarse language, not recommended for young children)
Fri-Sat 1:00, 4:20, 7:40, 11:00; Sun-Thru 1:00, 4:20, 7:40

YES MAN (14A)
Fri-Sat 7:25, 9:55, 12:15; Sun-Thru 7:25, 9:55

GRAN TORINO (14A, language may offend)
Fri-Sat 1:25, 4:10, 7:00, 9:45, 12:10; Sun-Thru 1:25, 4:10, 7:00, 9:45

BOLT (G)
Daily 1:15, 4:00

CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH

10000 102 Ave. 780.421.7020

FAST AND FURIOUS (14A)
No passes Daily 12:30, 1:15, 2:00, 3:20, 4:15, 5:15, 6:30, 7:20, 8:00, 9:15, 10:05, 10:40

ADVENTURELAND (14A, coarse language, substance abuse, language may offend)
Fri-Tue, Thu 1:40, 4:00, 7:10, 10:00; Wed 4:00, 7:10, 10:00; Star and Strollers Screening: Wed 1:00

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
No passes Fri-Tue, Thu 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:10; Wed 5:20, 7:40, 10:10; Star and Strollers Screening: no passes, Wed 1:00

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS 3D (G)
Digital 3d, No passes Daily 12:15, 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15, 11:30

12 ROUNDS (14A)
Daily 2:10, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20

THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT (14A, frightening scenes, disturbing content, not recommended for children)
Daily 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
Daily 12:20, 2:40, 5:10, 7:50, 10:35

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Daily 12:50, 3:40, 6:45, 9:40

KNOWING (14A, frightening scenes, violence)
Daily 1:30, 4:20, 7:15, 10:15

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Daily 12:10, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 9:50

WATCHMEN (18A, gory scenes, brutal violence)
Daily 1:00, 4:30, 8:30

TAKEN (14A, violence)
Fri-Sun, Tue-Thu 9:30; Mon 10:00

PAUL BLART: MALL COP (PG)
Daily 12:05

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (14A, violence)
Fri-Sun, Tue-Thu 1:10, 3:50, 6:40; Mon 1:10, 3:50, 6:40

THE TRAGICALLY HIP: WE ARE THE SAME-ONE NIGHT ONLY, LIVE IN HD (Classification not available)
Mon 8:00

CINEPLEX ODEON SOUTH

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FAST AND FURIOUS (14A)
No passes Daily 12:30, 1:30, 3:30, 4:30, 7:15, 7:45, 10:00, 10:30

ADVENTURELAND (14A, coarse language, substance abuse, language may offend)
Digital Cinema Fri-Wed 1:40, 4:15, 7:25, 10:15; Thu 4:15, 7:25, 10:15; Star and Strollers Screening: Thu 1:00

8X10 TASVEER (HINDI W.E.S.T.) (STC)
Daily 12:15, 3:20, 6:30, 9:40

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
No passes Daily 12:45, 3:00, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS 3D (G)
Digital 3d, No passes Daily 12:00, 2:20, 4:40, 7:00, 9:20

12 ROUNDS (14A)
Daily 12:50, 3:45, 7:10, 10:10

THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT (14A, frightening scenes, disturbing content, not recommended for children)
Daily 1:45, 4:10, 7:50, 10:20

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
Daily 1:50, 4:20, 7:55, 10:25

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Fri-Wed 12:20, 3:40, 6:45, 9:50; Thu 3:40, 6:45, 9:50; Star and Strollers Screening: Thu 1:00

KNOWING (14A, frightening scenes, violence)
Daily 1:15, 4:35, 7:25, 10:30

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Daily 12:10, 2:25, 4:55, 7:20, 9:55

WATCHMEN (18A, gory scenes, brutal violence)
Daily 1:00, 5:00, 9:00

HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG, coarse language, sexual content)
Daily 1:10, 3:50, 6:50, 9:25

TAKEN (14A, violence)
Fri, Sun, Tue-Thu 2:30, 4:50, 6:55, 9:15; Sat 4:50, 6:55, 9:15; Mon 4:50, 6:55, 9:15

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (14A, violence)
Fri-Sat, Tue-Thu 1:00, 4:00, 6:40, 9:40; Sun 12:00, 2:35, 9:40; Mon 1:00, 6:40, 9:40

METROPOLITAN OPERA LUCIA DI LAMMERMOORE (Classification not available)
Sat 11:00

WWW.WRESTLEMANIA.COM (Classification not available)
Sun 5:00

THE TRAGICALLY HIP: WE ARE THE SAME - ONE NIGHT ONLY, LIVE IN HD (Classification not available)
Mon 5:00, 8:00

CITY CENTRE 9

10000 102 Ave. 780.421.7020

FAST AND FURIOUS (14A)
No passes Daily 12:30, 1:30, 3:30, 4:30, 7:00, 7:40, 9:40, 10:10; Mon-Thru 7:00, 7:40, 9:40, 10:10

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
No passes Fri-Sun 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00; Mon-Thru 7:30, 10:00

12 ROUNDS (14A)
Fri-Sun 12:50, 4:20, 7:10, 9:50; Mon-Thru 7:10, 9:50

THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT (14A, frightening scenes, disturbing content, not recommended for children)
Fri-Sun 1:10, 3:50, 6:50, 9:20; Mon-Thru 6:50, 9:20

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
Fri-Sun 12:40, 4:00, 7:20, 10:20; Mon-Thru 7:20, 10:20

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Fri-Sun 12:30, 3:30, 6:40, 9:45; Mon-Thru 6:40, 9:45

KNOWING (14A, frightening scenes, violence)
Fri-Sun 1:00, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15; Mon-Thru 7:15, 10:15

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Fri-Sun 1:30, 4:30, 7:05, 9:30; Mon 10:10; Tue-Thu 7:05, 9:30

WATCHMEN (18A, gory scenes, brutal violence)
Fri-Sun 12:10, 4:10, 8:00; Mon-Thru 8:00

THE TRAGICALLY HIP: WE ARE THE SAME-ONE NIGHT ONLY, LIVE IN HD (Classification not available)
Daily 12:10, 6:30

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Daily 12:10, 6:30

DTS Digital Daily 3:25, 9:25

SUNSHINE CLEANING (14A, mature themes, coarse language)
DTS Digital Daily 12:20, 3:00, 7:00, 9:30

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
DTS Digital Daily 12:30, 3:35, 6:40, 9:15

CLAREVIEW 10

4211-139 Ave. 780.472.7600

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT (18A, gory scenes, sexual violence, brutal violence)
Daily 9:40

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Fri-Sun 1:10

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Fri-Sun 12:50, 4:05, 6:55; Mon-Thru 4:05, 6:55

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
Fri-Sun 1:40, 4:20, 7:05, 9:35; Mon-Thru 4:20, 7:05, 9:35

KNOWING (14A, frightening scenes, violence)
Daily 3:50, 6:45, 9:30

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
No passes Fri-Sun 1:30, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50; Mon-Thru 4:10, 6:30, 8:50; Reel Babies Mon 1:00

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS 3D (G)
No Passes, Digital 3d Fri-Sun 12:00, 2:20, 4:40, 7:00, 9:20; Digital 3d Mon-Thru 4:40, 7:00, 9:20

THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT (14A, frightening scenes, disturbing content, not recommended for children)
Fri 7:20, 9:50; Sat-Sun 2:00, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50; Mon-Thru 4:50, 7:20, 9:50

12 ROUNDS (14A)
Fri-Sun 12:30, 3:45, 6:35, 9:10; Mon-Thru 3:45, 6:35, 9:10

HOTEL FOR DOGS (G)
Toonie Matinee Fri 2:00, 4:50

FAST AND FURIOUS (14A)
No Passes, On 2 Screens Fri-Sun 1:00, 1:50, 4:00, 4:30, 6:40, 7:10, 9:15, 9:45; Mon-Thru 4:00, 4:30, 6:40, 7:10, 9:15, 9:45

ADVENTURELAND (14A, coarse language, substance abuse, language may offend)
Fri-Sun 1:20, 4:15, 6:50, 9:25; Mon-Thru 4:15, 6:50, 9:25

DUGGAN CINEMA-CAMROSE

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MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
Daily 7:10 9:10; Sat, Sun 2:10

FAST AND FURIOUS 4 (14A)
Daily 6:55 9:05; Sat-Sun 1:55

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, crude content, coarse language)
Daily 7:15, 9:15, Sat-Sun 2:15

KNOWING (14A, violence, frightening scenes)
Daily 7:00 9:10; Sat-Sun 2:00

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Sat-Sun 2:05

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Daily 6:45 9:00

GALAXY-SHERWOOD PARK

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FAST AND FURIOUS (14A)
No passes Fri-Sun 12:20, 1:20, 3:40, 4:40, 7:00, 7:40, 9:40, 10:10; Mon-Thru 7:00, 7:40, 9:40, 10:10

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
No passes Fri-Sun 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00; Mon-Thru 7:30, 10:00

12 ROUNDS (14A)
Fri-Sun 12:50, 4:20, 7:10, 9:50; Mon-Thru 7:10, 9:50

THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT (14A, frightening scenes, disturbing content, not recommended for children)
Fri-Sun 1:10, 3:50, 6:50, 9:20; Mon-Thru 6:50, 9:20

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
Fri-Sun 12:40, 4:00, 7:20, 10:20; Mon-Thru 7:20, 10:20

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Fri-Sun 12:30, 3:30, 6:40, 9:45; Mon-Thru 6:40, 9:45

KNOWING (14A, frightening scenes, violence)
Fri-Sun 1:00, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15; Mon-Thru 7:15, 10:15

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Fri-Sun 1:30, 4:30, 7:05, 9:30; Mon 10:10; Tue-Thu 7:05, 9:30

WATCHMEN (18A, gory scenes, brutal violence)
Fri-Sun 12:10, 4:10, 8:00; Mon-Thru 8:00

THE TRAGICALLY HIP: WE ARE THE SAME-ONE NIGHT ONLY, LIVE IN HD (Classification not available)
Daily 12:10, 6:30

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Daily 12:10, 6:30

LIVE IN HD (Classification not available)
Mon 8:00

GRANEAU

4211-139 Ave. 780.472.7600

CHE-PART 1 (14A)

Daily 6:50, 9:20; Sat-Sun 2:00

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave.
St. Albert, 780.458.9822

Date of issue only: Thu Apr 2

CORALINE (PG, not recommended for young children, frightening scenes)
Thu, Apr 2: 11:45

HOTEL FOR DOGS (G)
Thu, Apr 2: 11:30

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
Thu, Apr 2: 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10

KNOWING (14A, frightening scenes, violence)
Thu, Apr 2: 1:30, 3:55, 6:40, 9:00

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Thu, Apr 2: 1:45, 4:05, 6:30, 8:55

PAUL BLART: MALL COP (PG)
Thu, Apr 2: 11:25

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
Thu, Apr 2: 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 9:40

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
Thu, Apr 2: 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:35, 9:30

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Date of issue only: Thu, Apr 2

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
Thu, Apr 2: 6:55, 9:15; Spring Break Mat: 12:55, 3:15

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, crude content, coarse language)
Thu, Apr 2: 7:10, 9:20; Spring Break Mat: 1:10, 3:20

DUPLICITY (PG, coarse language)
Thu, Apr 2: 7:00, 9:35; Spring Break Mat: 1:00, 3:35

KNOWING (14A, violence, frightening scenes)
Thu, Apr 2: 7:05, 9:30; Spring Break Mat: 1:05, 3:30

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Behind the T-shirt

Soderbergh creates something more than a biopic in two-part *Che*

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuwweekly.com

In November 1956, he left Mexico for Cuba in a leaky boat with 82 men, only 12 of whom would live to see victory. The sequence depicting this traversal toward the island and the years-long struggle that would define Ernesto "Che" Guevara's destiny is stark, quiet, fleeting, yet, tellingly, it offers one of the film's rare close-ups of its protagonist. It lingers in your mind long after you've watched *Che* in its entirety, not simply because this moment is returned to so eloquently in its coda, but because by the time you've made it through all this you can't help but look back on it as one of those truly indelible turning points, punctured with immediacy, anticipation, history, ambiguity. It's the threshold upon which one of the 20th century's most controversial and ideologically complex lives begins to truly bloom.

I first saw *Che* over two nights during the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival, and a second time several months later over the course of one sitting with a lunch break between the two parts. These two parts were originally entitled *The Argentine* and *Guerrilla* but have since been marketed by the rather less-inspired *Part One* and *Part Two*. *Part One* will open in Edmonton first, and there are perfectly good reasons to see it separately with plenty of digestion time before the more daunting *Part Two* arrives in the coming weeks, even if the films possess a certain extra potency when viewing them in succession as a diptych, as two chronicles of armed uprisings, one successful and legendary, the other disastrous and sad. No matter how they're packaged, I urge you to see them both in the theatre, without interruptions, to submit to this audacious beast of an epic. This decade-in-development



BIOPIC

OPENS FRI, APR 3
CHE PART ONE
DIRECTED BY STEVEN SODERBERGH
WRITTEN PETER BUCHMAN
STARRING BENICIO DEL TORO, DEMIÁN BICHIR,
JULIA ORMOND, CATALINA SANDINO MORENO
★★★★★

labour of love from producer Laura Bickford, actor Benicio del Toro and director Steven Soderbergh is a most particular kind of masterwork, demanding special attention and, I believe, rewarding it in kind.

PART ONE IS, by contrast at least, the more conventional biopic of the two, shifting mainly between two trajectories. *One* follows Guevara's pivotal role in the Cuban Revolution from 1956-'59, which closes on a perfect note—he's just about to roll into Havana and heady glory but stops on the way to chew out some colleagues for appropriating a gorgeous convertible—that stops just shy of what a flabbier movie would consider the proper climax. The other is his visit to New York and the United Nations in 1964, when he was at his height of international celebrity and is interviewed by journalist Lisa Howard (Julia Ormond) for ABC. "Maybe a little powder," Guevara (Del Toro, so good with stillness that he can absorb a multitude of possible intentions at once) quietly suggests after initially declining any make-up for the cameras. It's one of a number of moments of levity and conveys something of Guevara's learned sense of showmanship, a striking counterpoint to the preceding years of spartan jungle existence, the strategizing, the combat, the asthma attacks, and the submission to the vision of Fidel Castro (Demián Bichir), already rehearsing his beard-stroking and cigar waving.

This is in part a movie about merel extraordinary men becoming global icons, told through the accumulation and refinement of facial hair and the symbolic value of battle fatigues. It isn't, I think, a polemical movie in any clear-cut sense. Despite the propagandistic poster art, Soderbergh hasn't calibrated *Che* to render Guevara a humanized hero or, as is often the case with biopics, reduce his persona or accomplishments. Yet one of *Che*'s most distinguishing characteristics is surely the ways in which its *mise en scène* corroborates with Guevara's ethos. For a film ostensibly about one man, the integrity of the collective is repeatedly emphasized, not only in the scenes of Guevara's training, camaraderie, lecturing or disciplining of his comrades-in-arms—among whom Santiago Cabrera's Camilo Cienfuegos really deserves to be singled out for his charismatic presence—but in Soderbergh's camerawork, guerrilla-like production model and the process-oriented narrative itself which updates and renovates the dormant aesthetic of the docudrama. You could even say that *Che* is in a sense a dramatized instruction manual, perhaps the only war movie from which a layman can actually grasp a coherent sense of how an uprising is staged.

Of course to really see the extent to which *Che* commits to evoking the most gruelling aspects of jungle warfare one needs to wait for *Part Two* where Soderbergh's commitment to this fusion of form and content becomes more singly focused and severe. But we'll come back to that when *Part Two* opens here, which is hopefully very soon. ▽

Che Part Two is scheduled to open at either the Garneau or Princess on Friday, April 10. Check back next week for Josef Braun's discussion of *Part Two*.

INTRODUCING THE NEW CONFERENCE CENTRE APRIL 10TH

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She'll be coming 'round *The Mountain*

Erika Wennerstrom heads south and finds her Heartless Bastards in Texas

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

Erika Wennerstrom is not the sort of songwriter who beams a smile from ear to ear. That's abundantly clear in the rawness of the songs on *The Mountain*, the third album from Wennerstrom's band, **Heartless Bastards**. From the slow, determined distorted guitar strums that set the album in motion with its title track—which is also dusted with a mournful pedal steel guitar—to Wennerstrom's lyrics, both contemplative and sorrowful, there is an openness to the album that reveals much of the heartbreak that befell its songwriter in the times leading up to its creation.

For the first two *Heartless Bastards* full-length records, the band was a trio comprised of Wennerstrom on vocals and guitar, her boyfriend Mike Lamping on bass and Kevin Vaughn on drums. A split with Lamping left Wennerstrom looking for a new start, so she picked up in 2007 and left her Cincinnati home for a new one in Austin.

Once she was settled in Texas, Wennerstrom set about writing *The Mountain*, though she admits that she didn't exactly start from scratch when she holed up for a few months to finish the songs.

"I'll carry ideas in my head for years, so some of these songs I had even arrangements and parts," she explains over the phone. "But it always takes me a lot longer to figure out what I want to say with a song, and I would say that almost all the words and the meanings of the songs for the most part formed in Austin. And then some of them had been completely started and finished there, but some of them were works in progress before I moved."

It's pretty clear from Wennerstrom's words on the album that the breakup and the move south inform a large part of *The Mountain*: "I packed up and headed to the city of light / To escape from pain and for thrills," she sings on "Out At Sea."

But if there's always a dark cloud lingering overhead, there's also a ray of light trying its best to break through. And that's something that Wennerstrom is constantly on the

PREVIEW

WED, APR 8 (8 PM)
HEARTLESS BASTARDS
WITH THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM
STARLITE ROOM, \$17.50

lookout for, refusing to wallow in misery when she can work towards something better, something that while not exactly gleaming and sparkling is certainly a shade or two lighter. As she sings on one of *The Mountain's* tracks, "Hold your head high, just as high as you can / Things will work out soon, things will come 'round again." It seems fairly clear that while Wennerstrom refuses to ignore her past, she's also trying to get through the hurt and find a comfortable space for herself.

"[McCarthy] said, 'Why don't you just concentrate on finishing this album, finish writing this album, and I have some people that I think would be perfect for the recording,'" Wennerstrom explains. "So I just decided to concentrate on finishing the songs and then I ended up really liking as people and musicians [the players] that he brought in for the recording of the album."

The session musicians worked out perfectly for the album, serving Wennerstrom's songs just right, imbuing them with a sense of rebirth—emphasized

was at the University of Texas wrapping up a Master's in jazz, so she called him up and got him on board. Then another phone call was placed to Ebaugh and the bassist moved from Cincinnati to Austin and the new *Heartless Bastards* was born. And it wouldn't be long before the group grew from a trio to a quartet.

"And now we've added another member—we added a guitarist, Mark Nathan, recently," Wennerstrom notes. "There's a lot of extra instrumentation

THERE ARE SOME bands that change up members only to find that the magic of the previous grouping has been lost, but Wennerstrom has dodged that curse on *The Mountain* and on stage. That likely stems in large part from the fact that Wennerstrom's songs have always been the band's heart, and she has consistently evolved as writer over three records—there was the slightly ethereal touch to *All This Time* and a step towards punk on *Stairs and Elevators*.

All the while, though, the band has never sounded as though it has gone far from the garage from which it emerged, with Wennerstrom's lyrics keeping the songs focused on survival, giving a backbone to the music that ties the *Heartless Bastards'* catalogue together. There's no denying that Wennerstrom exposes her feelings in lines like "I tell myself these bitter, these bitter days will end / You just got to let on go" and "Gonna keep on going / I don't want to stand still," but there's also a vagueness to the lyrics that she admits is an intentional guarding of her deepest feelings, a way of leaving things open for interpretation while keeping part of the music for herself.

"I have these very personal meanings to each song and I feel like different people get different things out of them, and I usually don't ever like to explain songs because I like people to get what they want out of it," she says. "But I find that sometimes at different times in my life songs that I wrote words for and their meanings for me at the time that I wrote them can sometimes mean something to me at a later point in my life that's different."

"It is very personal to me, but I feel like me making it a bit vague is me guarding myself from putting too much out there," she continues. "It's just enough where I feel like I am expressing myself and have this release of expression without telling everybody a little too much of my business." ▽



AND SO THE SONGWRITER took the band's name with her to Austin with plans to put together a new group of *Heartless Bastards* to record *The Mountain* and then take the tunes out on the road afterwards. But Mike McCarthy, who has produced records for ... And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead and Spoon before teaming up with Wennerstrom on *The Mountain*, suggested that she spend her time finishing up the songs rather than trying to find the right mix of musicians at the same time

even more by the spaces in McCarthy's wide-open production—but she still had her eye set on a road band that could take the songs both old and new out and kick the life into them on the stage.

That's where drummer Dave Colvin and bassist Jesse Ebaugh came into the picture—or came back in, actually. Colvin and Ebaugh had played on the original *Heartless Bastards* demo with Wennerstrom before moving on to other projects.

Wennerstrom found that Colvin

on the album and I didn't feel the three-piece could do the album justice. And there are actually parts on the other albums, there were some songs with extra parts that we've never been able to fully have sound the way I'd like them to sound, so he really fills out the sound overall. Mark was living in Austin and he had actually done sound for us in the fall and we got along so great, and we knew he was a really good guitarist, and it just seemed natural to ask Mark."

MUSIC | **ENTER SANDOR**
SUNNY SANDOR
JAMES H. HANCOCK / MCA

Then, as time went on and I realized the only way to excite people about music was to not make readers feel stupid or out-snobbied when reading about new bands—and that the purpose of the journalist is to communicate, not alienate—I took on the attitude that comparisons needed to be done tactfully. When I was at *Vue*, we used to have writers'

With one comparison, singer Stephen Malkmus was fine. ("When it comes to the Fall, we pretty much tried to rip them off the best we can," he said.) But Malkmus rolled his eyes when the Wedding

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of Vue Weekly, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

**FULL MOON
FOLK CLUB**



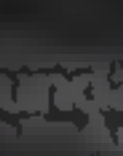
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MUSIC

BACKLASH BLUES

ROLAND PLEMMING
roland@vancouverweekly.com

If I had to think of one characteristic to classify today's society, I'd have to borrow from William Strauss and Neil Howe's book *Generations* and rethink their definition of the current New Silent Generation as the more concise "iGeneration." Selfish in pursuit of personal happiness like the Me Generation of baby boomers, the iGeneration is seemingly consumed by self-aggrandizement, and the advent of the Internet has made temporary celebrity easier to obtain than ever. This has manifested itself in both a desperation to be stagefront hangers-on for C-list DJs from the States as well as in the troubling confusion between the actual tenets of reality and the manufactured existence peddled by reality shows. But these are none more apparent and dangerous than with the all-encompassing cultural impact of social networking sites, specifically Twitter.

My experiment with Twitter came from a vague fascination with its simplified format (basically a mobile version of Facebook's status update system rendered into a micro-blog reading experience) and specifically, basketball star Shaquille O'Neal. Only feeling closer to him when

playing *Shaq Fu* for SNES, his Twitter account (twitter.com/THE_REAL_SHAQ) is a comedy tour-de-force, a self-aware technological critique and an open social experiment on the nature of celebrity.

He tweets about wanting to break his diet and then 20 minutes later, posts a cell-phone photo of him eating an ice cream cone. He tweets at half-time during games. He states his current location and awards free game tickets to the first person to run up and tag him. Diplo (twitter.com/diplo) tweets about losing equipment on planes, ruining his underwear at impromptu pool parties and his generally bizarre lifestyle as a globetrotting superstar DJ. It's full immersion with people you never thought you'd know anything about.

It's an interesting promotional model and it's fairly amusing, but could you imagine being able to mail a letter to Bob Dylan in the '60s and getting a direct response back? How does this affect the mystique of the artist? By establishing themselves as Regular Joes, they ingratiate themselves to their fanbase, but lose the long term power and mystery of the "untouchable artist."

HOW EXACTLY DID people get away from simply having an online representation of their personality (Friendster) to exploiting minor access to musicians and mimicking their promo techniques on MySpace to

expanding that into full-on tabloid celebrity worship and a desire for disposable fame? Twitter terminology for getting an RSS feed of someone's site is literally called "following." In not-so-thinly veiled words, it's a way of expressing the voyeuristic, stalkerish core of this new enterprise, another way for everyone to know everything about you without actually meeting you.

I find these sites also alter real life interpersonal dynamics. Instead of traditional dating with touch-and-go awkwardness and leaps of faith, it's now socially acceptable to trade full names for later Facebook correspondence with precisely tailored messages. Courtship is changed by the fact that people have unprecedented, carefully pre-treated access to people they barely know.

Still, like most things that are bad for you, Twitter is fun and addictive. It won't be long before Twitter becomes the status quo, taking the path of least resistance to sitcom references, corporate sponsor/spam overload and my mom knowing about it (the kiss of death). I'm being followed by marketing companies, websites, musicians, writers and radio stations, along with "merely" normal people hoping for a glimpse at a distant realm that makes them feel like the world isn't exactly isolated to themselves. That is to say, not yet. ▽

You can follow Roland on Twitter at twitter.com/roland_weapon.

REVUE DIARY OF A GIGGLEND

TUE, MAR 31 / WINTERSLEEP / STARLITE ROOM

See the photos and read Gravy's review online at vancouverweekly.com

ARTIST RECIPE (Piano)
8pm, \$20 (adult)/\$15 (senior)/\$10 (student) at TIX on the Square

EDMONTON PATRIOT
Past, Present and Future: Opera NUOVA, Theodore Baerg (barrone) 5:30pm (door)

EDMONTON UNITED CHURCH
Songs of the Lament Season, Arise Women's Choir, 3pm, \$18 (adv adult at TIX on the Square)/\$15 (adv student/senior); more at the door

WINSPEAR CENTRE Men, Myth and Magic: Carmina Burana, Sun Showcase Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, William Eddins (conductor), Hana Davidson (soprano) Bonaventura Bottone (tenor), Hugh Russell, (barrone), Kokopelli, Oran, Cantlon Chamber Chorus Ultraman Male Chorus, 2pm

DJS

BACKSTAGE TAP AND GRILL
Industry Night: with Atomic Improv, Jameoli and DJ Tim

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Afternoons: Phil, 2-7pm, Main Floor Got To Give It Up: Funk, Soul Motown, Disco with DJ Red Dawn

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
greatest in House, Progressive and Trp-Hop, Rudy Electro, 10pm-2:30am, guest DJs inquire at kelly@smichetti.com

GINGUR Ladies Industry Sundays

NEW CITY SUBURBS
Sundays with Neighbourhood Rats

OVER THE HILL
Industry Night: Requests with DJ Bo

ROCKSTAR
and XS, guests, no cover

MON LIVE MUSIC

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Mondays: live music monthly, no cover, 10pm-12am

BLUES ON WHITE
stage Mondays with different song

writers hosting each week, presented by Jimmy Whiffen of Hole in the Guitar Productions, 8-12

PAWN SHOP Aids Wolf, Shearing Pina, Famine tickets at TicketMaster, Blackbyrd, Listen, Megatunes

JOHN L. HART MacEwan College, and U of A Big Band Concert, 7:30pm, \$10 (adult)/\$8 (student/senior) at TIX on the Square

PAWN SHOP Aids Wolf, Shearing Pina, Famine tickets at TicketMaster, Blackbyrd, Listen, Megatunes

PLEASANTVIEW COMMUNITY fiddle jam hosted by the Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers Society, 7pm

REAL PLACE 8pm, \$349.50 at TicketMaster

ROSE BOWL/ROUGE LOUNGE The Legendary Rose Bowl Monday Jam hosted by Sherry-Lee Wisor/Mike McDonald (alternating), 9pm-12am

CLASSICAL

CONVOCAION HALL Music at Noon, Student Recital Series, 2pm

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Noon Hour Organ Recital, Featuring Yoon Park (organ); 12pm free

DJS

BAR WILD Service industry night, no minors, 9pm-2am

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Confederacy of Dunces, Dad Rock, TJ

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB Electro latest and greatest in House, Progressive and Trp-Hop, 12am-2:30am, interested guest DJs inquire at kelly@smichetti.com, karaoke with Tizzy, amateur strip contest, 9pm-12am

FILTHY McNASTY'S Metal Mondays: with DJ S.W.A.G

FLUID LOUNGE

NEW CITY LIKVID LOUNGE

BUDDY'S Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser, 9pm

ESMERALDA cover with student ID

PUNK BUDDHA Latin and Salsa music, dance lessons 8-10pm

TUE LIVE MUSIC

BLUES ON WHITE Mudmen

BRDCK BAR Big Rock Untapped and Unplugged, Kimberly Spears, 9pm (door); free (before 10pm)/\$5 (after 10pm)

DRINK WASTIN' ASSEMBLY stage with Chris Wynters

LE'S PUB Tuesday open stage every Tuesday night, 9pm-1am; featuring guests hosted by Mark Ammar and Noel (Big

MCDUGALL UNITED CHURCH Guy Clark, Slaid Cleaves, 8pm, \$34.25 at TicketMaster

PEPPER'S Shannon Johnson and friends

PAWN SHOP Sebastian Grainger and the Mountains, Flash Lightning, no minors, 9pm (door)

SECOND CUP-24 STREET mic every Tue, 8-10pm

SECOND CUP-STANLEY MILNER LIBRARY Open mic every Tue, 7-9pm

SHEDS PUB Jam with Alicia Jan and Rickley Sidecar, 8pm

SHEDS PUB Fundra, open (door); advance tickets \$5 (house)

WARDEN SUITE Tuesday Night Jam: 7:30pm (door)/8pm (show); \$4 (member)

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Wootton with DJ Gunden

BUDDY'S Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser, 9pm

ESMERALDA cover with student ID

PUNK BUDDHA Latin and Salsa music, dance lessons 8-10pm

GINGUR SKY Bashment Tuesdays

Reggae music; no cover

NEW CITY LIKVID LOUNGE 'abilly, Ghoul-rock, spooky with DJ Yylan

RED STAR Tuesdays: Experimental Indie Rock, Hip Hop, Electro with DJ Hot Philly

SPORTSWORLD INLINE AND AND ROLLER SKATING DISCO Retro Night, 7-10:30pm; www.sports-world.ca

WED LIVE MUSIC

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Main Floor: Gitter Gulch Wednesdays. Live music once a month

BLUES ON WHITE

COOK COUNTY Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, 8pm; \$61.95 at TicketMaster

ROCKSTAR jazz every Wednesday night 6-9pm

EDDIE SHORTS Open stage every Wed all gear provided

FESTIVAL PLACE Don't Stop the Music, 6:30pm, \$6.25 at

GINGUR SKY Open Stage with Brian Gregg

GINGUR SKY with Ido, 8:30pm, free

GINGUR SKY Band, 8pm, \$5/person minimum charge

GINGUR SKY new DJ, no cover

GINGUR SKY with Greg Gory and Eddie Luchini

GINGUR SKY Acoustic Bluegrass jam presented by the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society every Wednesday evening

GINGUR SKY Shiraz Wednesdays featuring Dave Babcock and his Jump Trio

RIVER CREE Wednesdays Live Band hosted by Yukon Jack, 7:30-9pm

SECOND CUP-MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT 8-10pm

STARLITE ROOM The Anthem, Heartless Bastards, \$17.50 at ticketmaster.com, Blackbyrd

STEEPS TEALOUNGE Open mic every Wed 8-10:30pm

TEMPLE Wild Style Wednesday Live hip hop, every Wed 8-10pm

WEST SALOON

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Nights: with DJ Harley

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Floor Blue Jays Messy Night, 11pm-1am, Brit pop, new wave, punk rock 'n' roll with LL Cool J

BUDDY'S Hump day with DJ Seany

FLUID LOUNGE Wednesdays Rock

DIESEL ULTRA LOUNGE Wednesdays R&B, old school, reggaeton with

GINGUR SKY DJ Spincycle

NEW CITY LIKVID LOUNGE DJ Roxi Slade (indie, punk and more)

NEW CITY SUBURBS with Greg Gory and Eddie Luchini

NICKI DIAMONDS Punk and metal every Wednesday

RED STAR Wednesday

STARLITE ROOM

STOOL Age and weekly guests, 9pm-12am

WINTER new DJ, no cover

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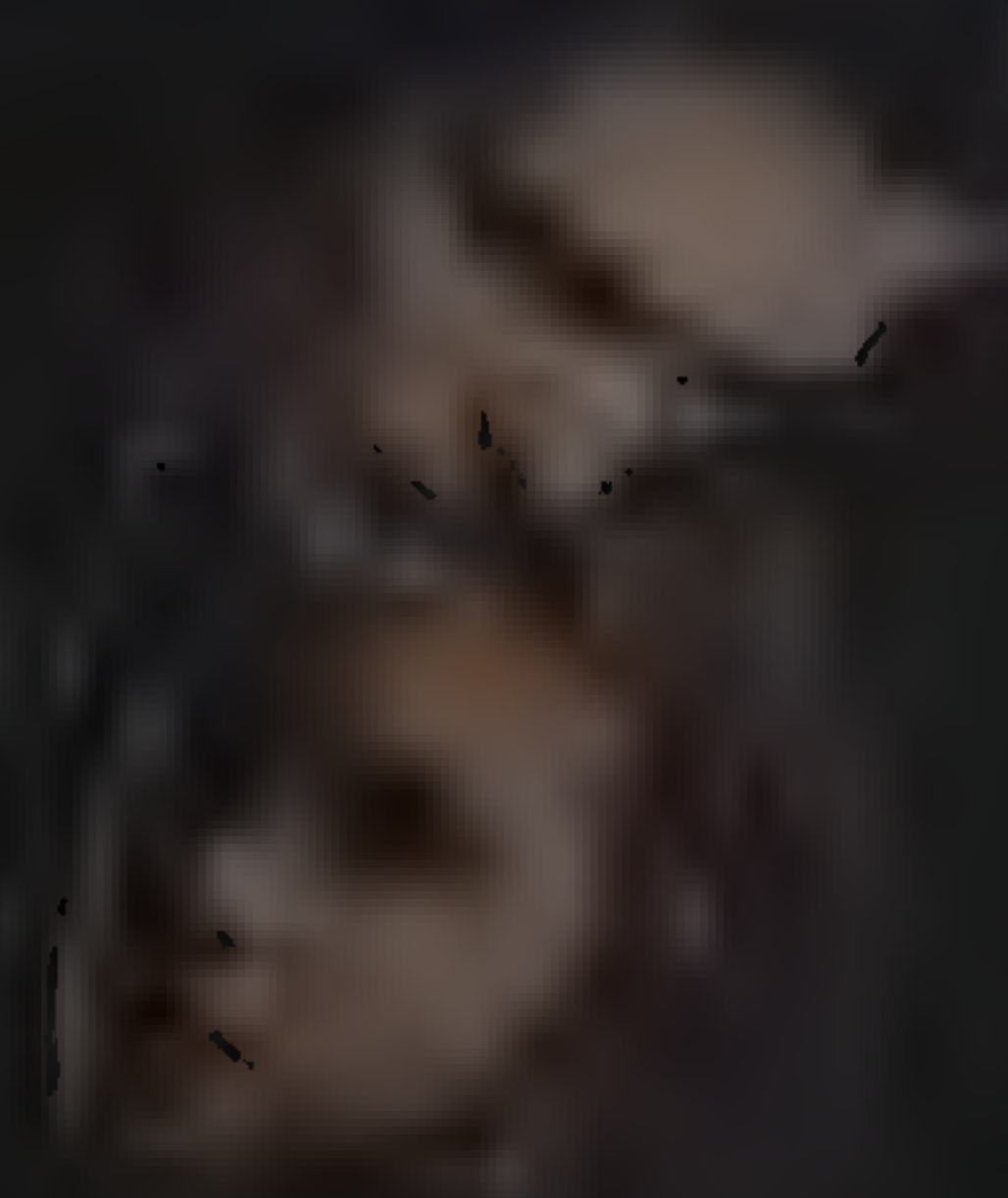
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FOUNDATION CONCERTS

FRI APRIL 3

STARLITE



HEY ROSETTA!
FRIDAY APRIL 3 - DAN MANGAN
PATTI SMITH GROUP & THE BEE

WED APRIL 8

PAWNSHOP

HEY OCEAN!
with guests SPIRAL BEACH
ALL WISHES FILL

FRIDAY MAY 1

PAWNSHOP

HANSON BROTHERS
POTTY UMBRELLA & OLD WIVES

FRI APRIL 3

PAWNSHOP BLACK PEN ARTISTS FROM SASKATOON...

THE DEEP DARK WOODS
THE WHEAT POOL & RED RAM

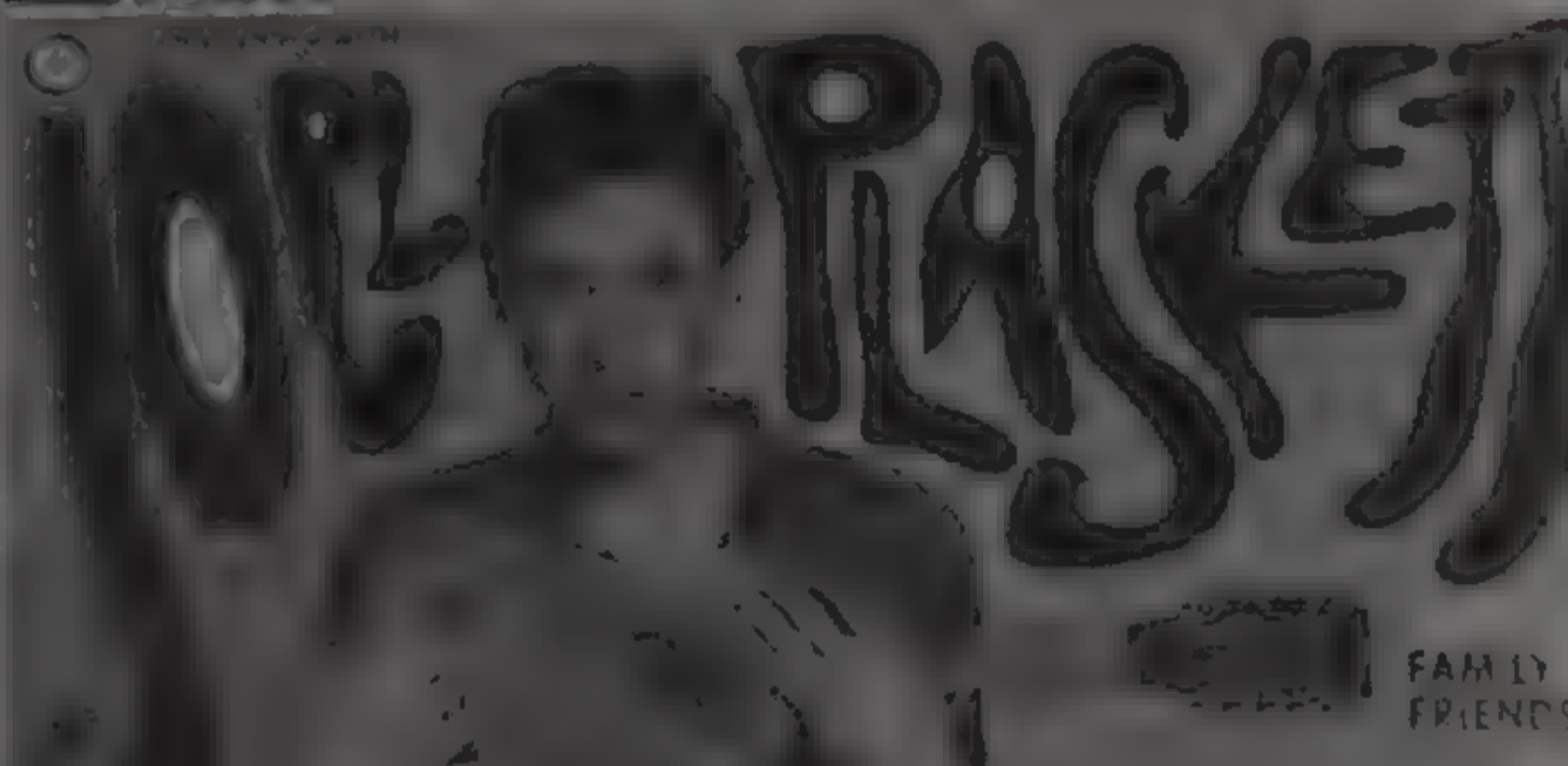
THU APRIL 9

PAWNSHOP

NOMEANSNO
POTTY UMBRELLA AND COFFIN SHIPS

THURSDAY MAY 14

MACDOUGALL UNITED



OLD RASCALS
FAMILY FRIENDS

SAT APRIL 4

HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB

NO EXCUSE WITH
Connie Kaldor

SUNDAY APRIL 12

PAWNSHOP

FUCKED UP
OPENERS:
40 THIEVES + WAR DOVES

THURSDAY MAY 14

HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB

EMM GRYNER
WITH JP HOE
JUST ANNOUNCED

MON APRIL 5

PAWNSHOP SKINGRAFT ARTISTS FROM MONTREAL...

AIDS WOLF
SHEARING PINK EMMIES

THURSDAY APRIL 23

PAWNSHOP

PARAMEDIC
FIVE ALARM FUNK

SATURDAY MAY 16

MACDOUGALL UNITED

PATRICK WATSON

TUE APRIL 7

MACDOUGALL UNITED

GUY CLARK
WITH JORDAN
WITH SLAD CLEAVES

FRIDAY APRIL 24

HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB

Melissa McClelland
JASON PLUMB

SATURDAY MAY 16

BRIXX

JAPANDROIDS
JUST ANNOUNCED

TUE APRIL 7

STARLITE

JUNIOR BOYS
+ MAX TUNDRA

SATURDAY APRIL 25

PAWNSHOP SONIC 102.9 PRESENTS FROM TORONTO...

USS
UNBROUGHT SYNERGY SONGS
RED FLAG CARNET & SONGTAPES

WEDNESDAY MAY 20

HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB

KING KIHAN AND THE SHRINES
STYLISH MARK TULLY DIBO

FOR MORE LISTINGS AND MORE INFO GO TO **FOUNDATIONCONCERTS.COM**



NoProm0

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vancweekly.com

If you're a fan of Vancouver-based NoMeansNo, then it's a given that you'll be at the band's show. And if you're not a fan and you're not going to make it out, well that's OK with the band, too. Never having been big into the whole self-promotion thing, NoMeansNo has always been more about touring and keeping things DIY than it has been about checking the charts and phoning the manager.

Which isn't to say the band isn't popular. NoMeansNo can pack 'em in. Sometimes it seems inexplicable that a band so uninterested in talking itself up can still—having been a band for well over two decades—get the people out of their houses and into a cramped club, but that's exactly what NoMeansNo does.

PREVIEW

THU, APR 9 (8 PM)
NOMEANSNO
WITH PATTY DOWNHILL, CUPID SHIPS
PAWN SHOP, \$18

"We're kind of like the Grateful Dead of punk rock," laughs drummer John Wright. "We have this core group of fans that are always coming out and always buying our records, so we're not trying to overtly promote ourselves all the time or trying to maximize sales."

NoMeansNo—as well as the band's beer-swilling, hockey-loving, bespectacled alter ego the Hanson Brothers—is especially popular in Europe, and it was the frequent touring on the other side of the Atlantic that gave rise to the title of the band's latest album, *All Roads Lead to Ausfahrt*,

named after the exits on German roadways. Somewhat more straight-ahead than some of the band's other work, *Ausfahrt*, according to Wright, sounded the way it does in reaction to the jazzier offerings of 2000's *One*.

"One was a long album, it was kind of a sit-down-and-listen-to-it-with-headphones album, so we just decided we wanted to write a bunch of shorter songs, do something a little different that we hadn't done for a little while," he says. "We seemed due for a more straight-ahead punk rock album so that's how it ended up—but it still has a couple of weird songs on it."

THE BAND HAS BEEN working on new material that should be ready by the time it goes on tour, and Wright and his bandmates couldn't think of anything better to be doing with their time than making music, so there should be no shortage of NoMeansNo material in the future.

"We enjoy writing songs and performing and there's always a crowd. There's always people coming out and seeing us and we've been able to make a living at it—this would be a long haul if it was a hobby. When you have demands of a family or financial demands, it's hard to be a band," he says. "But we've managed to make money, and I feel as though we've been pretty consistent in our song writing, there's always something new and interesting in our songwriting, the crowds keep coming out and enjoying it so there's lots of support for doing what we do. I mean, what would I rather do, wash dishes or drive a cab? I think I'd rather play in a band and tour Europe." ▽

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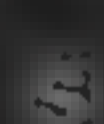
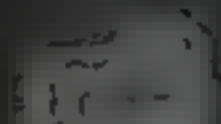


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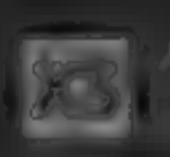


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Postcards from the road

Dan Mangan is a travelling man these days

by [illegible] / [illegible]

These are busy times for Dan Mangan. The Vancouver-based songwriter was at Canadian Music Week in Toronto, played a show in Québec, back out for Austin, Texas and South by Southwest, then landed back home for a brief week-long break to see his girlfriend and catch up on some errands. Of course, he arrived back in Vancouver just when the Junos were happening, so he ended up playing Junofest downtown on Granville Street while there. And now he's heading back out on the road for another stretch of touring.

Mangan's not complaining, though. In fact he's pretty damn excited to get out there, given that he's got a new album to support for the first time since 2005's debut *Postcards and Daydreaming*. The new EP, *Roboteer*, is a prelude to a full-length that will arrive later this year. The new album includes songs from the upcoming album and a new recording of one of Mangan's older songs.

The last track on *Roboteer* is a new archival release, coming from *A Pretty Decent Cape In My Hand*, a 2007 album by Shane Koyczan and the Short Story Long.



PREVIEW FRI APR 3 (8 PM)
DAN MANGAN
WITH THE COLLIER RHYME BAND, HEY ROXIE!
STARLITE ROOM, \$17 (ADVANCE), \$15 (DOOR)

"I've been doing a lot of work in the last couple of years collaborating with an incredible spoken-word artist named Shane Koyczan," Mangan explains. "He's kind of gaining a name as a show

stopper and a lot of people have seen him in front of thousands of people standing alone on a stage with no instruments and it's pin-drop quiet."

AND THAT'S VERY MUCH THE CASE. "Tragic Turn of Events/Move Pen Move," the collaboration between Mangan and Koyczan—it's breathtaking and impossible to ignore as it spills out from the speakers. And Mangan says that the piece's creation was about as natural as it could have been.

"That song I played, 'A Tragic Turn of Events,' it was just kind of a song kicking around in my head—I never play it live, I've never recorded it other than that," he says. "And the second we were sitting down and he's like, 'I'd like you to put something in this poem,' it just worked perfectly."

"[Koyczan's] got a band called the Short Story Long, that he plays with and they're all based in Pentreton, BC," Mangan continues, recounting how the track came to be. "I was there for a show and we played the show together and I had one extra day in Pentreton, so we just kind of crammed everything into that day and went into the studio. I think I recorded four or five songs on their CD." ▼

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Q & A With Metal Guitarist Ben Harbak

Q: What's your favorite band? AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, How would you fit your style into rock music?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.

Q: What kind of gear do you use?

A: I use a Caparison Dellinger guitar, and an ENGL Powerball for my amp.

Q: Who are your influences?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.

Q: What's your favorite album?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.

Q: What's your favorite song?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.

Q: What's your favorite band?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.

Q: What's your favorite album?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.

Q: What album are you currently spinning?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.

Q: When are your next gigs?

A: I love all of them. I always get asked that question. I love AC/DC, The Beatles, Exile, and I love rock music.



Photo by James C. Stanoroom / www.jcsphoto.ca

Modern lovers

Junior Boys only romantic about the songwriting process

BY LARRY PUGHARTON / www.420mag.com

Jeremy Greenspan is misunderstood. Shy but forthright, he has a specific way he wants to be viewed, but it's not done with an egotistical or controlling air. He lets people into his world, but wants to make sure they wipe their feet before they come in. **Junior Boys**, his project with Matt Didemus, is nearing the release of third album *Begone Dull Care* and it's obvious that Greenspan is used to being careful about his image.

"People reference a lot of '80s stuff," he says from his home in Hamilton. "I find it more irritating

PREVIEW TUE. APR 7 (8 PM)
JUNIOR BOYS
BRITISH INDIAN LUTHERANS
STARLITE ROOM, \$17

from the point of people trying to market us: Asking for photographs of us in thin ties, I don't go for that shit. I'm not interested in propagating that kind of image."

The typically perceived idea of the band being a new take on electro pop bands of the '80s is off-base. In our interview, Greenspan rifles off influences ranging from slower disco to early experimental

electronic music like the BBC Radiophonic Orchestra and Steve Reich to off-kilter pop acts like Nils Lofgren, Yellow Magic Orchestra and Sparks. The new record has more in common with yacht rock than any Human League notes you might expect.

"I was listening to a lot of '70s soft rock," he admits. "Not like Michael McDonald, but more like Steely Dan, during the *Katy Lied* period. Their touring band was the band that became Toto. The drummer really got into it. He's the drummer on Michael Jackson's *Thriller*."

Not unlike the cleverly cynical lyrics and smooth sounds of Steely Dan's output, *Begone Dull Care* is full of extensive builds and organic, subtle arrangements that develop long after your first spin through the record.

"There's a conceit of making the songs unfold a little slower. We want to make it transparent, you can almost hear the creative

process as it happens. You have to live with it for a little bit," he explains. "That went back to my fascination with the '70s, a time when you could make a record and have your record label not harass you about what the single is. I wanted to make it more of an album than a collection of potential singles. I mastered the album twice on a tube console—we wanted it to be mastered significantly quieter than most records these days."

THIS ATTENTION TO DETAIL could be applied to several other artistic disciplines, so it comes as no surprise that the assumption that Greenspan and Didemus are love balladeers is just a red herring for their paeans about the creative process.

"The concept was to make this album about making the third album. The songs make reference to the creative work, filtered through the filmmaker Norman McLaren. Whether it's through the approach of films or filmmaking or working with your hands, it's assembling collages of things into something workable," he says. "'Sneak A Picture' is actually about photography. 'Hazel' and 'Dull to Pause' are about how to stay sane while you're touring. It's like Ulysses coming back from the odyssey. [I try to] make it so you can infer a traditional pop song out of it too."

This meta approach to songwriting actually shows a different side to what may have initially been consid-

ered straightforward. As an abstract basis for pop songcraft, Greenspan turns out to be doing this for a very simple reason.

"It's all about trying to do something experimental in the spirit of youth," he says. "I don't make music that is alienating for people or obtuse or difficult to understand. Even if I did a 40-minute weird track, I wouldn't want it to be [something] I couldn't play for my grandmother."

"We didn't want to make songs that sounded like Triumph, songs about 'the power of music,'" he laughs. "If you make an album about making an album and make it too literal, it ends up sounding ridiculous."

Even though this is the group's third album and the members are comfortably seated on a highly respected label in Domino Records, Greenspan still seems unsure as to how this record in particular will fare.

"I give up trying to think who this is for," he confesses. "I personally shy away from trying to be marketable. I just don't think there's some particular demographic. We've never been part of any scene or particularly marketable. That's in part because I choose to live here [in Hamilton]. There's no pressure whatsoever to be anything other than honest."

His trepidation is unfounded. *Begone Dull Care* is the product of a studious band made up of players in touch with who they are and how they want the listener to feel. ▽

PREVIEW
TUE APR 7 (7 PM)
GUY CLARK
WITH SIAID CLEVES
ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH, \$34.25

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuweekly.com

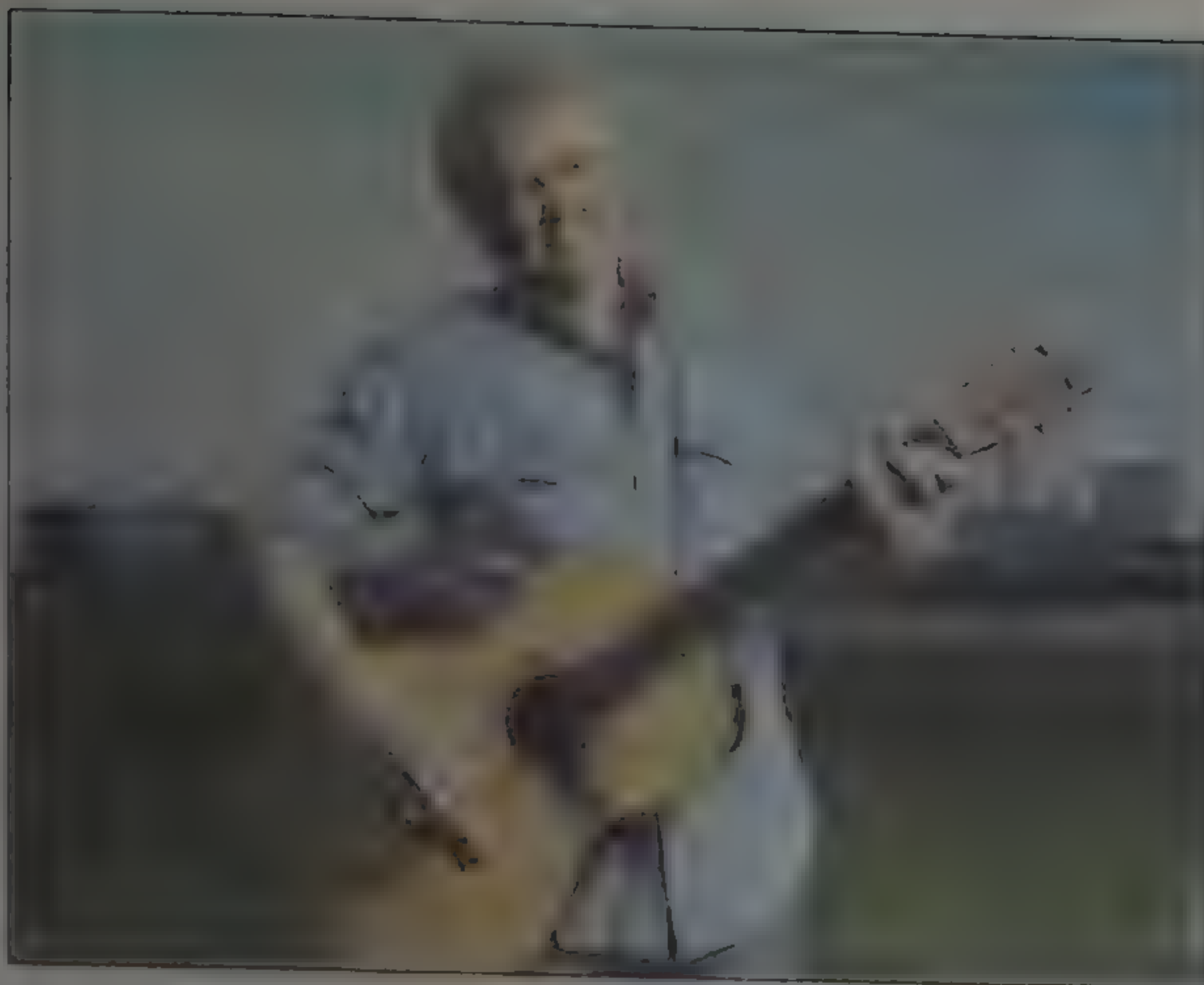
Most people would like to think that music is nothing but fun. They'd like to believe that it's an easy life writing, recording and playing songs. But that's simply not the case at all. In fact, most people who have ever sat down to write a song can admit that despite those exceptional moments when the words and melody tumble out unaided, there's usually a great amount of effort involved in pulling a tune out of the air and turning it into something worth playing many times over.

While there are some songwriters who seem to have their best to feed the mystique, claiming that all their songs appear to them fully formed, Guy Clark is not one of those. For this troubadour, songwriting is work, and there's no shame in that. In fact, after writing by himself for many

years, he turned to songwriting primarily in collaborations because it took some extra effort.

"Recently I got into collaborating with mostly friends of mine—but sometimes just people I don't know—and I enjoy it. I enjoy the word wrangling and working stuff out," he says over the phone from the guitar workshop in his home. "And one of the other things I found out when I got into it, is when you write with someone else, if you have a good idea or a good line, you have to say it out loud and it becomes aural. You can sit by yourself in a room for days and mumble this line to yourself and think that it's just wonderful, but the minute you try to sing it or say it out loud to someone else, it doesn't work. So that eliminates that little stumbling block sometimes just by saying it out loud and then going, 'Oh no, that doesn't work,' whereas if you just kept it to yourself you wouldn't come to that realization that soon."

Clark takes his songwriting seriously; he also takes his guitars seriously, having spent much of his life building his



own instruments

"I kind of think they're flamenco guitars—they're meant to be pissy and bright and brassy, loud," he laughs. "It's

just the kind of guitar I started playing when I first started playing in south Texas—the first thing you got was a Mexican guitar. And I love the style of

construction. It's the purest form of guitars almost."

The songwriter's latest album, 2006's *Workbench Songs*, is a finely crafted collection of tunes that makes reference to Clark's work building guitars

"The title [*Workbench Songs*] comes from the fact that that's where I wrote them," he explains. "I have a little work studio room that has my guitar shop—I'm sitting looking at it right now, the workbench and everything—and this is where I write 'em."

"I really like the idea of what I do which is ... sit and write songs and be able to get up and walk five feet and work on a guitar," he continues. "It's kind of right brain-left brain stuff. Just songwriting is so cerebral—you're just sitting and looking out a window and trying to come up with something, using your imagination, and then to walk over to a work bench and do something that's real hard-eye stuff. To me they seem to feed off of one another—it's kind of a symbiotic thing. One clears your head for the other." ▽



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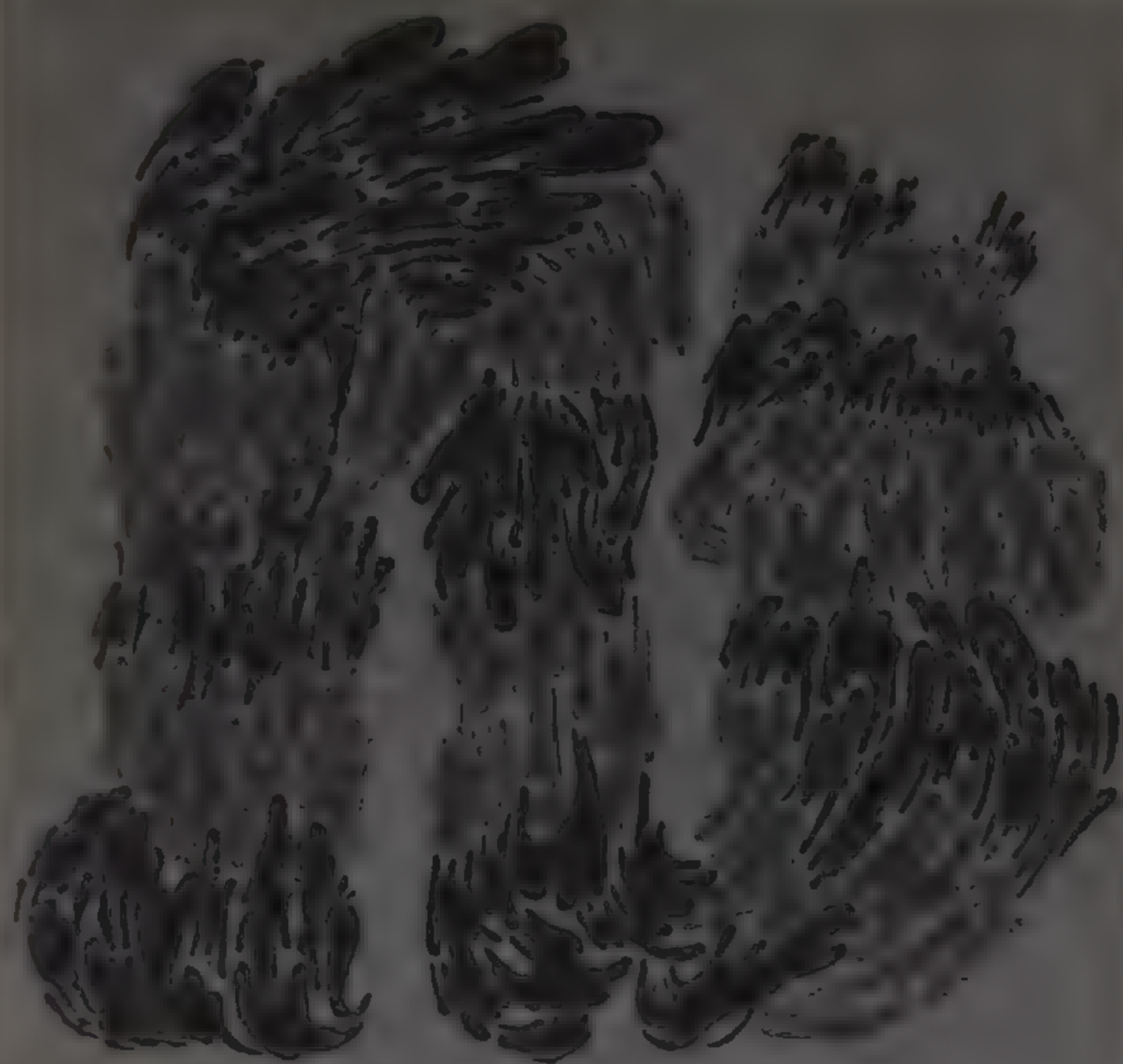
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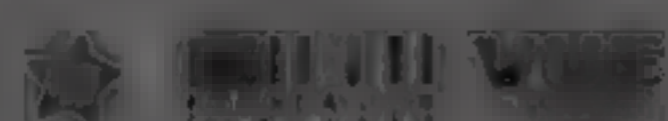
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Seventy years later

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuvueweekly.com

Seventy years ago, Oliver Jones sat down at the piano and performed for the first time. It goes without saying that at the tender age of five, he had no idea where his talent on 88 keys would lead him. He had no idea that at 74, he would still be clocking in some 60 performances a year.

"I would not have even dreamed of all the success and the very wonderful opportunities that I've had. So I'm very, very grateful," Jones says from his part-time home in Florida. "I don't know how much longer I will continue, because I have a very, very bad habit of not being able to say no. That's what usually gets me into trouble."

That habit had him away from home for three-quarters of the year before he settled on retirement back in '99. But it was the same habit that pulled him out of retirement in '04. You can't really blame him, though. Not only was it the 25th anniversary of the Montréal Jazz Festival, but he also had an offer he couldn't refuse—an opportunity to share the stage for the first time with his mentor and childhood friend, Oscar Peterson.

"Oscar always used to laugh at me, because he couldn't figure out what I was retiring about," Jones laughs. "He said, 'Here I am 10 years older than you and I have no plans of retiring—



PREVIEW

OLIVER JONES

FRI, APR 3 (7:30 PM)
HORIZON STAGE, SPRUCE GROVE, \$24

SAT, APR 4 (8 PM)
DOW CENTENNIAL CENTRE, FORT SASKATCHEWAN,
\$35.50

you shouldn't either."

Nonetheless, Jones expected to do that one performance and slip quietly back into retirement. After all, there were plenty of younger, talented musicians more than capable enough to take the reigns. But the cosmos had other plans.

The calls for gigs kept coming in, and the itch to get back into the studio needed a scratch. Since adding the "semi-" to his retired status, Jones

has recorded three albums: the soon-to-be released collaboration with Hank Jones, 2006's *One More Time*, and last September's *Second Time Around*. The latter two have already been winners of Québec's Félix Awards, and this year, Jones may very well be the oldest Juno winner for best traditional jazz recording.

EVEN WITH MORE than a handful of honorary doctorates and nearly 100 awards to his credit, there are a couple that certainly stand out.

"It's always very rewarding, but the Order of Canada and the Order of Québec—those meant a lot to me because finally there was acknowledgment of this music by a government," he says. "For so long, it was just considered cellar music, or strictly black music—now, it has taken its place. Things that I know in my father's time—something that Oscar and I were talking about—our fathers would never believe what's happened to us ... I have played jazz now on every single continent that there is, and it's just so surprising to be in China or Japan or in Puerto Rico where I lived for so many years, and to see people recognize the jazz artists and buying the music—that is something that I'd never envisioned. I always thought it would remain at the same level."

Indeed, Jones was nearly 50 before he was able to earn a living playing strictly jazz—he spent so many years playing everything but. That could be why retirement never really agreed with him. ▀



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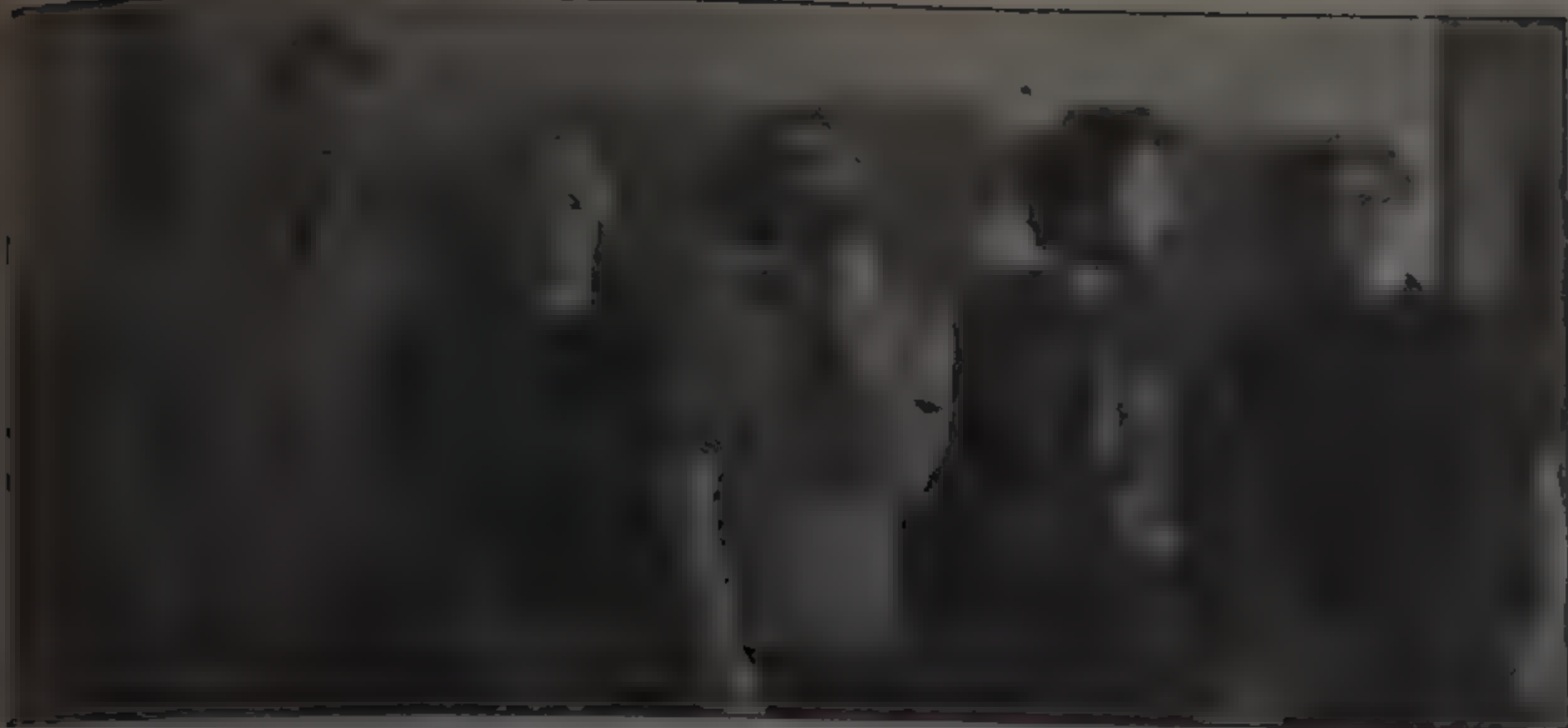
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Viva Liptonia!

DIRTLES / bryan@vuwweekly.com

Street names and places have long been mined for musical monikers. From Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band to the Sugarhill Gang to Edmonton's own defunct Calico Drive, examples of naming your band after where you come from abound, and Winnipeg's the Liptonians has followed in that line, but switched it up a bit.

When the band started, its main songwriters, Matt Schellenberg and Bucky Driedger, moved into a house on Winnipeg's Lipton Street in an attempt to create a space where they could write and record music together. Over time, as more and more friends dropped by, the house gradually came to be known as Liptonia, a name befitting a miniature fiefdom dedicated to creativity in the midst of

PREVIEW FRI, APR 3 (9 PM)
THE LIPTONIANS
 WITH KALEY BIRD AND THE FLOCK, WOOL ON
 1200X
 BRUX BAR & GRILL, \$10

the city. When the time came to pick a band name, the members of the Liptonians embraced their citizenship and picked a name reflecting it.

Still, nothing lasts forever and not all of the Liptonians live in Liptonia anymore.

"Matt actually moved out of Liptonia—he got married this past summer," Driedger jokingly laments. "A stipulation was that he lived close, so he's two blocks away so it's really not that different from how it was before—there's still a lot of writing and recording we can do together."

Driedger and Schellenberg must

really enjoy recording by this point. Knowing nothing about it when they moved in, they learned by doing and two-and-a-half years later finally released a CD.

"We said we were gonna move into a house and record a record together, but we didn't really know how to do that. We had played music together for a while and done a little bit of songwriting together—albeit quite poor—but the first year of us living together was us just fumbling around on computers trying to figure out how to actually record things that we thought sounded OK," explains Driedger. "Our friends who knew more than us would come over and help us out."

SOMEONE MUST HAVE known what they were doing, as this past year the Liptonians—rounded out by Mike Petkau, Darren Grunau and Terrell Froese—found itself the recipient of a Western Canadian Music Award for Outstanding Pop Recording.

"That was the biggest surprise to us. We felt kind of out of place in this pop category—being a very unpolished record that was recorded in our basement and to be nominated—so when we went out there and they announced our name at the awards ceremony it just seemed so ludicrous that this record that we had talked about making for three years previously and then battled through making it in our basement, that it ended up winning an award," Driedger recounts, still somewhat flabbergasted. "It was a real surprise and I'm really happy." ▼

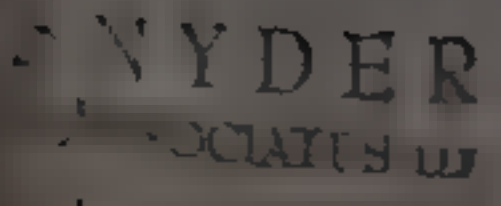

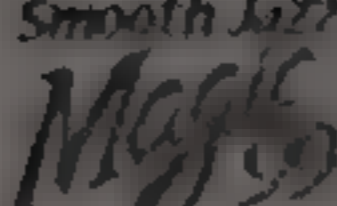
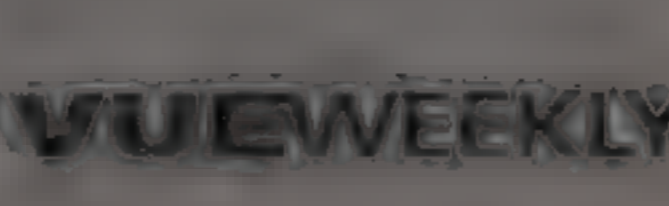


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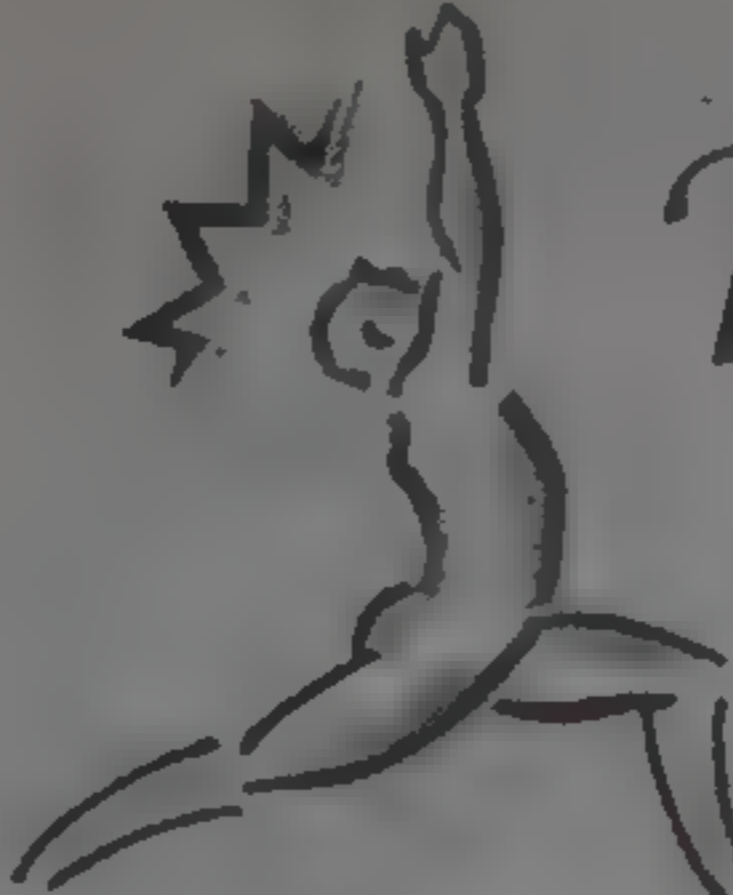
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04/03
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WOOL ON WOLVES / THE LIPTONIANS

04/04
LIV STREET BAND
THE RIPPERZ / NEEDLES TO VINYL

04/07 EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT IN BLOX
BEAG BEAG
UNTAPPED AND UNPLUGGED TUESDAYS... THIS WEEK:
KIMBERLY SPEARS

04/10 FROM TORONTO
THE JOYS
THE SOUTHERN PINK / THE SHAKE DOWNS

04/11
THE BENDERS
PRAYING SAINTS / VROLOX

04/12 CANNIBAL CORPSE AFTER PARTY W/
DEATH TOLL RISING

04/14 EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT IN BLOX
BEAG BEAG
UNTAPPED AND UNPLUGGED TUESDAYS... THIS WEEK:
WILL BELLCOURT

04/17
SLEEPING GIRL
PALE MOON LIGHTS / URSAMINER

04/21 EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT IN BLOX
BEAG BEAG
UNTAPPED AND UNPLUGGED TUESDAYS... THIS WEEK:
MATT WALKER

04/24 URBAN DNA PRESENTS
TANYA MORGAN
MASIA ONE AND THE GREATER GOOD

04/25
SPECIAL ON SNAP!

04/26 FROM FOUNDATION NIGHT IN BLOX
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Joel Plaskett, *Three* (Maple Music)
I like Joel Plaskett. He's the kind of guy that can think to himself, "Hey, I've got all of these songs that have three-word titles, I should put them all on an album together," and then keep thinking, "But wait—what about all of these other songs I've written that have regular titles? Should those go on the same album?" and then he'll just answer, "For sure."

What such an open-ended theme leads to, however, is a triple-album—perhaps one of the most unwieldy ways to get a message out that musicians ever came up with. It's hard enough for most bands to keep the quality consistent over the course of a single disc, never mind adding two more, but Plaskett finds a way to make it work—most of the time. In a collection of 27 songs, there are bound to be some misses, and the individual discs can sometimes wobble thematically and get away from their intentions, but in the iPod age, it sometimes seems as though getting nitpicky about an album's flow is a bit like looking for a technician for your Victrola.

That's not to say that the album has no flow. The whole collection feels like a lament to things that are lost. Lost time, lost loves, lost opportunities. The first disc punches up, with brass instruments and jangly guitars. Lamentations, but in a fun way. Take, for example, the third track, "You Let Me Down," which is perhaps the oddest break-up song ever recorded. Though the protagonist is excited at the prospect of being broken-up with, this

is neither a song about looking forward to his newfound freedom, nor a song about how relieved he is to be out of a bad relationship. Instead, it's a bouncy song about how feeling sad can make you feel alive—how he hasn't been hurt permanently, but that it'll take a while to get over it, and that that's fine.

The second disc gets more pensive. A quieter and more self-reflective look at loss, the brass and jangle of the first disc is replaced by guitars that sound like they were recorded in a long hallway.

It's the kind of music that plays during movies where the hero stares out of his bedroom window while rain batters down upon it.

The third disc kicks it back up a notch, replacing brooding inwardness with an angrier spirit. The third disc could be the strongest as a

whole, and it musically continues the album's journey from the shock of loss to the depression that comes with realizing that you can't go back to the anger and energy that precedes moving on. Songs like "Precious, Precious, Precious" and "Rollin', Rollin', Rollin'" are fight-back songs, the latter utilizing steady kick drum and rollicking banjo to really drive its point home like a boxer on a speed bag. "I don't know where I'm going," sings Plaskett, "but I know what I've lost."

A nearly complete journey, Joel Plaskett's *Three* isn't just for the iPod set, it works as something you can drive to and get far away from your troubles. It covers the ups and downs of feeling incomplete, and the weirdness that comes with that territory. —BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuweekly.com



The Burning Hell, *Baby* (weewerk)
Peterborough's Burning Hell is back with its sophomore release, and far from just avoiding the dreaded sophomore slump, Burning Hell is bringing the party with it from Northern Ontario. Slightly more

upbeat in outlook than the band's previous album, 2008's *Happy Birthday Baby* nonetheless retains all of the wacky gallows humour that leader Mathias Kom made a name for himself with—and some of it is twisted into wild, meta tangents. Take the lyrics to one of the album's slower songs, "Everybody Needs a Body (to Be Somebody)," where Kom drones, "Every good album needs a slow song or two." And with plenty of horns keeping everything as exciting as a mariachi party, you can get the party on down. —BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuweekly.com

Bruce Cockburn, *Slice O Life* (True North)
Despite admiring his talents and progressive politics, I never truly appreciated Bruce Cockburn until I had the opportunity to see him play a live solo show. On stage Cockburn's charisma and musicianship take

on a whole new dimension. So, as Cockburn himself suggests in the album liner notes, he's long past due for his first live solo release. Cockburn wisely chose to leave the material raw—including soundchecks, banter and crowd noise—to preserve the feel of his live show. Despite being drawn from numerous shows, the album feels like a single night when it all clicked: the richness of Cockburn's guitar and voice filling the stage. For anyone who has been looking for an excuse to finally get into Cockburn, it's a good place to start. —SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuweekly.com

The Decemberists, *The Hazards of Love* (Capitol)
Whatever you want to say about Colin Meloy—and there's a lot of different shit you could sling towards the Decemberists and the band's front man—there's no denying the man has a talent for lit-

erate singing and songwriting: he generally manages to make his lyrics both a mouthful and tripping off the tongue, and usually uses them in the service of some grand narrative. What he doesn't always do is bother to make sure what's happening around those lyrics is interesting, which leads to records like 2006's middling *The Crane Wife* and now *The Hazards of Love*, a somewhat-bloated concept album that thinks its concept excuses it from being interesting in other ways. Musically, though, the band throws around a variety of styles it doesn't really explore or bring much to any of them, run-of-the-mill being the byword here. Fans of Meloy's lyricism will have plenty to soak up, but there are enough parts wheat and chaff to make the end result pretty forgettable. —DAVID BERRY / david@vuweekly.com

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05. s/t elfcgt	10. for the whole world to see death

Handsome Furs, *Face Control* (Sub Pop) There was a sense of introspection in *Plague Park*, Handsome Furs' full-length debut, the open spaces were filled by shambling guitars and contemplative synths. It was downcast in tone, but there was always a sense of

safety in its roots. Not so with *Face Control*. Safety has been removed from the equation, leaving behind haphazard approaches and terrifying drops and dives. Urgent and immediate come to mind as *Face Control* carves a destructive path through the niceties that have crept their way into much of today's rock 'n' roll. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

Chris Isaak, *Mr. Lucky* (Reprise) As is expected from Chris Isaak at this point in a career that is on album number 10, *Mr. Lucky* finds him crooning his way through some of the lowest places—"Cheater's Town" sees him on a lone, some-dime with a busted heart—

along with the occasional good time—"Summer Holiday" has the singer reliving a fond memory, though he tempers it with a little uncertainty in the present. And, like with most of his albums, and even more so with his live performances, Isaak's band demonstrates that it's absolutely one of the best in the business, tearing it up occasionally but more often laying back and playing for the song. Granted, for the longest time I saw Isaak as someone who wrote relatively pleasant music that worked better as background music than something that needed to be focused on, but after seeing him live I delved into his catalogue and found a steady and dependable artist with more than a few nuances to his music. *Mr. Lucky* doesn't hold much in the way of major surprises, but it certainly stands up alongside Isaak's previous work, and spend a little time with it and you just might find —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

Swan Lake, *Enemy Mine* (Jagjaguwar) On the surface, Swan Lake is a wet dream for anyone who likes slightly outré Canadian pop. A supergroup of the classic-rock inclined, hyperliterate Dan Bejar (Destroyer), soaring fabulist Spencer Krug (Wolf Parade)

and carnival-barking, reverb-freak Carey Mercer (Frog Eyes), the trio nevertheless doesn't quite live up to its sterling pedigree, either on their debut, *Beast Moans*, or their newest. The problem is that this doesn't represent a melding of their sensibilities so much as three brilliant artists putting together fans of any of the three. The hard pressed to dislike this, but still too disappointed to stand above any of their separate projects. There are still moments of consummate beauty—Bejar's "Heartswarm" and Krug's "Hand Disk" could hold up to any album—as a whole *Enemy Mine* just isn't as good as this tripling should be. —DAVID CARR / david@vuwweekly.com

MUSIC | OLD SOUNDS

OPEN MINDS
eden@vuwweekly.com

Kris Kristofferson, *Kristofferson* (Monument) Originally released: 1970 "You see, the devil haunts a hungry man / If you don't wanna join him, you got to beat him / I ain't sayin' I beat the devil, but I drank his beer for nothing / Then I stole his song." So Kris Kristofferson drawls on his debut self-titled record.

So much of Kristofferson's first album is about surviving, not winning. Winning is something that's largely out of reach for the characters populating the songwriter's lyrics—maybe the words are all about Kristofferson's own life, but even if they aren't he delivers them in a way that makes you believe that he's walked every hard mile in the 12 songs.

At times, the Devil lurks just around the corner and Kristofferson is simply content to get through the present—as on "To Beat the Devil," or "Help Me Make it Through the Night" where he sings, "Let the devil take tomorrow Lord / Tonight I need a friend"—and at others it's the grind of life that's threatening to crush the singer—the heartbreaking loneliness that is falls around "Casey's Last Ride": "Casey joins the hollow sound of silent people walking down / The stairway to the subway in the shadows down below."

Though he's been cast in the role of a country singer by an industry desperate for categorization, that only came later on—on *Kristofferson* the singer is really only country in sound in that he and the others who came to be labelled as outlaw country refused to play by the rules of the polished country music establishment.

The first sounds on the record have

more in common with the psychedelic pop of the earliest Syd Barrett-era of Pink Floyd than with anything that emerged from Nashville in the late '60s/early '70s. On "Blame it On the Stones," a ragged tom-up march carries on as Kristofferson assumes an ironic tone, ultimately aligning himself with the Rolling Stones: "Mister marvin middle class is really in a stew / Wonderin' what the younger generation's coming to / And the taste of his martini doesn't please his bitter tongue / Blame it on the Rolling Stones."

Later, on "The Law Is For Protection of the People," he follows a similar approach lyrically, though this time he cuts a meaner swath as he spits out his words, "The law is for protection of the people / Rules are rules and any fool can see /

We don't need no hairy-headed hippies / Scarin' decent folks like you and me."

But what makes Kristofferson so difficult to define as a songwriter is the way he careens through those two tracks, or the out-of-control damn-the-Man charge of "The Best of All Possible Worlds—"I tipped my bottle back and smacked into a cop I didnt see," he sings there—and then effortlessly turns his wheels and sings a tender love ballad or a slice-of-sadness lonely tune like "Me and Bobby McGee" and "The Other Side of Nowhere."

Even while shifting gears, Kristofferson's gruff voice and consistent tone tie the record together into a unified work, covering several bases while always centring around the fight to break even. *Kristofferson* was re-released as *Me and Bobby McGee* in 1971, cashing in on Kristofferson's growing popularity and Janis Joplin's success with the song. ▼

Kris Kristofferson plays the River Cree Resort and Casino on Sun, Apr 5 at 7 pm.

HAIKU | QUICK SPINS

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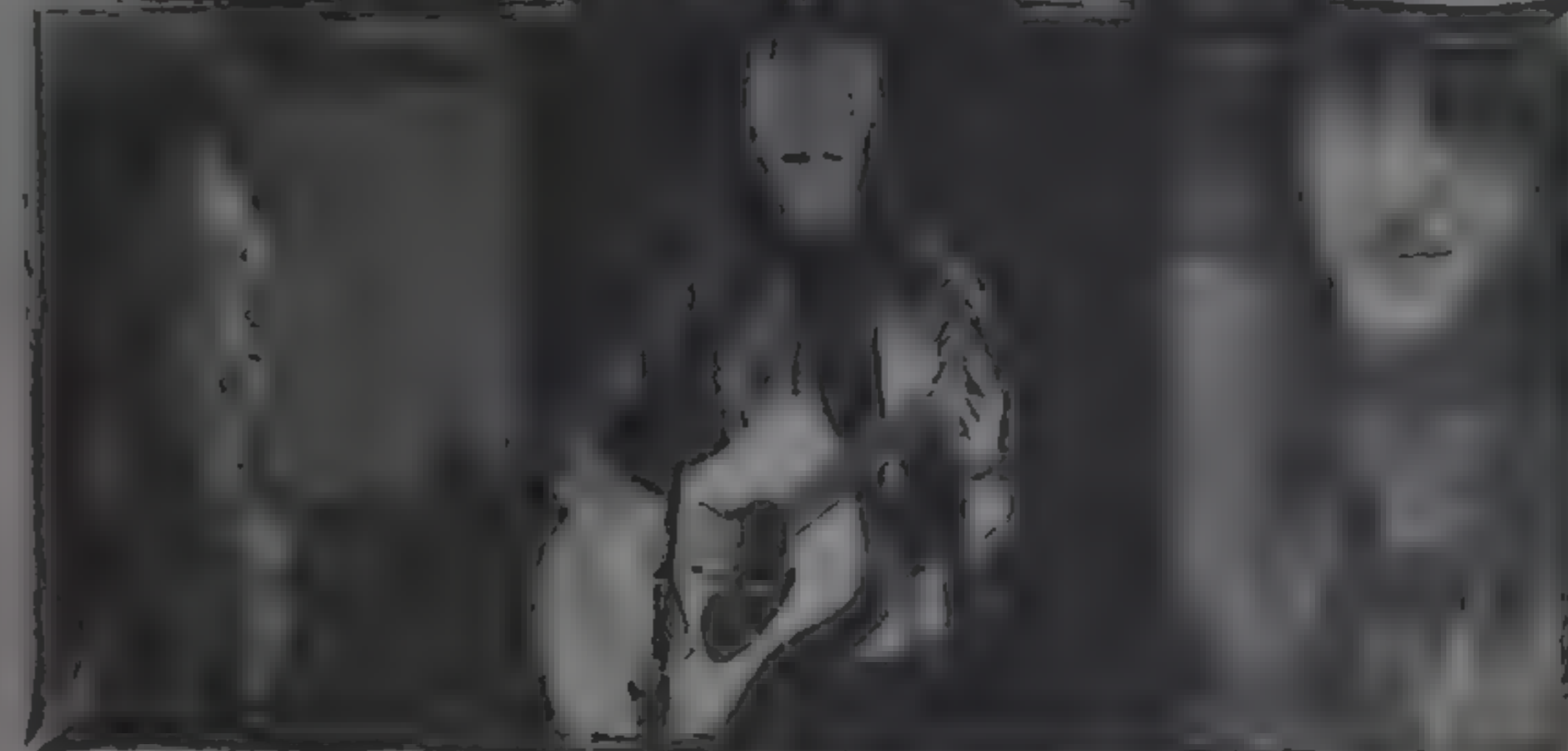
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MARIA KOTOVYCH / maria@vuweekly.com

Categorizing music into a clearly defined genre isn't always easy. Yet, some decisions are more obvious than others—people wouldn't think of Aerosmith as jazz, for example. But this doesn't mean that creating a jazz version of Aerosmith's music is impossible.

Jazz and blues singer Cara Matthew did just that on her recently released album, *Make You Feel My Love*. Not only does this record include bluesy takes of Aerosmith's "Pink" and "What It Takes," it also takes songs by artists such as Elton John, Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell and gives them a similar twist.

Matthew explains that taking this route allowed her to do something unique.

"I decided that instead of doing an album with standards that have been done before—people are still coming out with albums full of standards, of jazz standards—I thought I would do something different, and make standards out of classics—Elton John, Billy Joel," she says.

The songs on this album are ones that Matthew has always loved. Aerosmith, for instance, is one of her favourite bands. In addition to loving the group's lyrics, she also appreciates the music's very melodic nature. Having listened to these musicians for a long time, Matthew didn't have trouble jazzifying the group's tunes. •

"I loved these songs so much growing



up that I could feel them already, and they've always been brewing in me. So I didn't really find it that hard," she reflects, adding that all the musicians on the record had an opportunity to work out their own parts.

Anyone who has ever heard a remake knows that the ability to create a good one doesn't grace everyone who attempts

it; for Matthew, the secret behind a good rendition is doing something completely different from the original.

"If you do something like Aretha Franklin does something, well, Aretha Franklin already did that. Why would you want to sing it that way again? You want to make it your own; you want to do your own thing." ▽

ZODIAC FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

ROB GREZNY
 freewill@vuweekly.com

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

There's plain old everyday lightning, which travels about eight kilometres, and then there are superbolts—strokes of lightning that are a hundred times stronger than a normal flash and that can travel over 160 kilometres. In the coming weeks, Aries, your power levels could be more like these superbolts than your usual output. I suggest you take advantage. Just assume that you'll be able to shed more light and attract more attention than usual.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

When I was 19, I did Outward Bound, a wilderness survival course designed to make a man out of me. For 24 winter days, my team and I camped and travelled through New Hampshire's White Mountains. Near the end of the ordeal, we were each required to do a three-day "solo" experience, during which time we were left alone with only three things: a sleeping bag, a canvas tarp to use as a partial shelter and a box of mincemeat. The latter was a concentrated slab of food made of raisins, dried apples, lemon rind, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and dried beef. As I shivered and worried and sang loud songs and battled my own wild thoughts during those challenging but enlightening 72 hours, I grew to savour my odd-tasting delicacy. It kept me sane and grounded. As you prepare for your own rite of passage, Taurus, I suggest you procure the metaphorical equivalent of mincemeat.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

As reported in UK's *Mirror*, South African game warden Alex Larenty made a dramatic display of the trust he engenders among the animals under his care. Sidling up from behind to a full-grown male lion named Jamu, Larenty lightly grasped the beast's balls and held on for a while. Jamu did not protest. I invite you to attempt the metaphorical equivalent of this brave encounter, Gemini. According to my reading of the omens, you have the power to play with fire—and I mean "play" in every sense of the word.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

In his book *When the Impossible Happens*, Stanislaw Grof describes a man named Kurt who was "very unhappy if there were no problems in his life and adversaries against whom to fight." Kurt didn't just thrive on crises; he felt uncomfortable if he didn't have any. In my vision of how your destiny is unfolding, Cancerian, you now have the ability to express a more temperate version of this capacity. What I mean is that you could be highly entertained and resoundingly moved by the dilemmas that come into your vicinity, but without going overboard into obsession. You could embrace the challenges in appreciation for the way they compel you to get smarter, but without clutching them desperately.

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

Philosopher Bertrand Russell wasn't so much interested in the "will to believe." Rather, he preferred "the will to find out, which is the exact opposite." Your assignment, Leo, is to try his approach. Regard it as an experiment that you'll have fun with. For a few days, refuse to jump to any conclusions whatsoever. Be skeptical of all the-

ories about why things are the way they are. See if you can thrive without clinging to any ideology. Instead, be bursting with the intention to discover the raw truth, no matter where that leads you, and even if it seems to contradict your rules to live by.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

There will be other times when I'll encourage you to upgrade your relationships with your inner child, your inner mountain-climber and your inner serpent. Right now I hope you will take some quality time to commune with your inner elder. In my astrological opinion, you especially need the influence of this sage old part of you. He or she doesn't care overly much about social status, romantic drama or the obsession of the moment, but is more interested in what provides deep meaning, generates love, and offers the big-picture perspective. So try this, Virgo: leap ahead many years in your imagination and tune in to the guidance of the ripe and vibrant wise guy or wise woman you will ultimately become.

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

The sirens are enticing and wooing and tempting you again. This time they say have a really fabulous deal, even better than before. They're sorry, by the way, about the somewhat deceptive advertising they used on the last occasion you came their way. They want to assure you that they'll never again pull the bait-and-switch routine. So are you ready to give them another chance? Don't look to me for advice on what you should do. I'm simply here to report the situation. Besides, you need a good stiff test of your powers of discernment. Oh, one other thing: to demonstrate their sincerity, the sirens are offering you their first song and

dance absolutely free.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

The three tasks I think you should work on in the coming week are among the hardest any human being can attempt. Luckily, you now have an unusually strong aptitude for them, and are likely to receive unexpected assistance if you're brave enough to plunge ahead. Here they are. 1) Interrupt and overthrow negative trains of thought right in the middle of their flow through your brain. 2) Negotiate partial solutions to complex problems. In other words, do the half-right thing when it's impossible to do the totally right thing. 3) Understand that in order to graduate from a certain batch of weird karma that has persisted, you must completely accept the situation as it is, acknowledge your role in precipitating and prolonging it and feel gratitude for all that it has taught you.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

Some Japanese employees receive three days of "heartache leave" per year from the companies they work for. During those times they can recover from sad experiences or romantic reversals. If it were up to me, every company in every country in the world would annually provide workers with the opposite kind of holiday: ten days of "heart-soaring leave." These would be times devoted to cultivating blessed breakthroughs or celebrating great happiness. If there were such a system in place already, Sagittarius, I bet you'd use some of those heart-soaring days in the coming weeks.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

Your symbol for the week is the Mariana Trench, which is the lowest place on the earth's surface. Located underwater in the

Pacific Ocean, it's almost 11 kilometres down—further below sea level than Mt Everest is above sea level. I chose this natural feature for you to play with in your imagination because I'm hoping it will inspire you to explore the extreme depths. The coming days will be an excellent time to get better acquainted with the stuff that's at the very bottom of your world.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

Your IQ has crept up beyond its usual level, and may ascend even higher in the coming days. I suspect you're poised to erupt with a host of sharp insights, and maybe some brilliant analyses or strokes of genius as well. Why? How? It may have to do with the way the planets are massaging your brain chemistry. Or perhaps it's because you smell freedom, and your libido is boosting your intelligence with the enhancements that only the onset of exhilaration can provide. I recommend that you milk this gift for all it's worth. Don't waste time on trivial conquests like polishing off crossword puzzles or acing online personality tests. Try to solve the mystery of the ages, or at least your two knottiest problems.

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

"So I sing to my seeds," says gardener Leslie Gaydos. "What about it?" Although she sounds a bit defensive about treating her unsprouted kernels like sentient beings, I hope you won't be in the least apologetic as you carry out your assignment: Serenade your seeds. Bathe them in your tender concern. Infuse them with your intelligent love. Whether your seeds are literal plants or more metaphorical in nature, make it your priority to sweet-talk them and guide them into the next phase of their growth. ▽

EVENTS WEEKLY

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Deadline is Friday at 3 pm

CLUBS/LECTURES

AIKIKAI AIKIDO CLUB 10139-87 Ave, Old Strathcona Community League, • Japanese Martial Art of Aikido • Every Tue 7:30-9:30pm; Thu 6-8pm

ALBERTA OILSANDS: THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL REFLECTIONS Gameau United Church, 11148-84 Ave, 780.439.2501 • Lecture by Bob McKeon • Wed, Apr 8, 7:30-9:30pm • Free

ANTI-NATO RALLY Churchill Square, ecawar.org • The Edmonton Coalition Against War And Racism is organizing a rally as part of the Cross Canada Day of Action being coordinated by the Canadian Peace Alliance • Sat, Apr 4, 1pm

AWA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP Braeside Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr, Bishop St. Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet Mondays including holidays, 7:30pm

BEYOND BAND-AIDS AND BAILOUTS: PUBLIC SOLUTIONS IN CRITICAL TIMES Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre, 11727 Kingsway Ave, 780.420.0471 • Keynote Speaker: Judy Rebeck and speakers Elaine Bernard, David Foster, Dr. Robert Woolfard • Apr 3-5 • \$15 at Earth's General Store, Audrey's Books, APIRG (HUB Mall)

CHESS Edmonton Chess Club and Society of Alberta Chess Knights, 780.474.2318 • Learn to play chess; opportunities for all ages including classes, school programs and tournaments • rvn@chessedmonton.ca

ECOSYSTEM-BASED CONSERVATION PLANNING Rm 11-137, Biological Sciences Bldg, U of A, 780.432.0967 • Seminar with forest ecologist Herb Hammond presented by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Environmental Research and Studies Centre • Wed, Apr 8, 9am

EDMONTON CITY CENTRE AIRPORT-COMMUNITY CONVERSATION FORUM Ramada Hotel, Wild Rose Ballrooms 1 & 2, 11834 Kingsway, 866.269.1276 • A community discussion on the possibilities and challenges of existing and future land use on the ECCA Lands • Sat, Apr 4, 9:30am-3:30pm • Free, Pre-register by emailing info@dialoguepartners.ca

EDMONTON ESPERANTO SOCIETY Rm 1812, 10025-102A Ave, 780.702.5117 • Fri, noon-1pm • vaughn@sewardconsulting.com

DAY AND UNITED: HOW DID I GET HERE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN? Gameau United Church, 123, 11148-84 Ave, 780.439.2501 • Three United Church members share the struggles, joys and challenges of living out their faith and their orientation • Tue, Apr 7, 7:30-9:30pm • Free

GO GREEN ECO EXPO U of A Butte, 114 St, 87 Ave, 780.437.9244 • Lifestyle adjustments that will help all of us be more environmentally responsible • Sat, Apr 4, 10am-8pm • Free

LECTURES ON ISLAM SERIES www.augustana.ualberta.ca/ronning, 780.679.1104; 780.672.1187 • Lectures by Dr Muntaz Ahmad • **King's University College**, Lecture Theatre N-102, 9125-50 St, *Descent into Chaos: Pakistan and India in the Wake of the Mumbai Attacks*, Mon, Apr 6, noon • **U of A, TELUS Bldg, Rm 150**, *Descent into Chaos: Pakistan and India in the Wake of the Mumbai Attacks*, Mon, Apr 6, 7pm • **Trinity Lutheran Church**, 10014-81 Ave, *Interfaith Dialogue: Islam for Christians: What You Always Wanted to Know with Dr Ibrahim Abu-Rabi*, David Goa, and a number of presenters; Sat, Apr 4, 1-5pm

"HOME" EMERGING SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY FOR PASSIONATE LIVING Gameau/Ashbourne Assisted Living Place, 11148-84 Ave • Home: Blends music, drama, creativity and reflection on sacred texts to energise you for passionate living • Every Sun 3-5pm

IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB Pleasantview Community Hall, 10060-57 Ave, 780.962.6561/780.469.9776/780.452.6224 • Featuring presentations, speakers, workshops, outings, and competitions. All levels of photographers welcome • Meet the 2nd and 4th Thu each month; Sept-May, 8pm

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE-ISLAM FOR CHRISTIANS: WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014-81 Ave • Learn more about the Islamic faith hosted by Dr Ibrahim Abu-Rabi and David Goa • Sat, Apr 4, 1-5pm

LECTURES ON ISLAM SERIES F104, Augustana Campus, 4901-46 Ave, Camrose, www.augustana.ualberta.ca/ronning • *Religious Formation, Identity and Politics on the Boundary Between Pakistan* by Dr Muntaz Ahmad • Fri, Apr 3, 7-8:30pm • Free

MYTHS FOR PROFIT-CANADA'S ROLE IN INDUSTRIES OF WAR AND PEACE Steeps Tea, College Plaza, 11116-82 Ave • Documentary • Fri, Apr 10, 7pm • Free

REPENTANCE AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS Gameau United Church, 123, 11148-84 Ave, 780.439.2501 • Cecile Fausak presents information regarding the United Church's role in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, and in particular the Truth and Reconciliation Commission • Mon, Apr 6, 7:30-9:30pm • Free

SOCIETY OF GRAPHIC DESIGNERS OF CANADA-ALBERTA NORTH CHAPTER, AND MADE-EDMONTON MacEwan College, 105 St Bldg, Rm 5-142 • Presentation by Scott Stowell on his graphic design studio that creates rewarding experiences for people that look, read, and think • Thu, Apr 9, 7pm • \$5 (GDC/M.A.D.E. member)/\$10 (non-member) at the door

SUGARSWING DANCE CLUB Orange Hall, 10335-

84 Ave • Swing Dance at Sugar Foot Stamp: no experience needed, beginner lesson followed by dance every Sat • Apr 4, 8pm (door); www.sugarswing.com

U-22/ALBERTA MUSIC INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION Riverdale Hall • Informative, hands-on music workshop to build the skills and confidence of emerging songwriters and musicians • Sat, Apr 4 • \$40 (incl lunch and snacks) • Register at marc@telusplanet.net

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the 1st and 3rd Sat, 10-11am, each month, stand in silence for a world without violence

WOMEN ONLY BICYCLE REPAIR BikeWorks, 10047-80 Ave (enter through Back Alley), 780.433.2453 • Edmonton Bicycle Commuters' Society • (first and third Sundays of each month) • Apr 5, 19 • Free

WOMEN'S BRUNCH McDougall United Church, 10025-101 St, www.mcdougallunited.com • *The Power and Peril of Audacious Hope* with Wendy Edey • Sat, Apr 4, 11:30am-1:30pm • \$8; pre-register 780.428.1818

COMEDY

CARROT CAFE 9351-118 Ave, 780.471.1580 • People in Pants Improv • 1st Thu every month, 7:30-9pm • \$5

CITY CENTRE GYM Grant MacEwan College, 10700-104 Ave • Rick Mercer: My Adventures in Canadian Television • Wed, Apr 8, 6pm (door), 7pm (show) • \$20 at TIX on the Square

COMEDY FACTORY Gateway Entertainment Centre, 34 Ave, Calgary Trail • Thu, 8:30pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm • Dennis Ross; Apr 2-4 • Steven Juliano Moore; Apr 9-11

COMIC STRIP Bourbon St, WEM, 780.483.5999, www.thecomictrip.ca • Hit or Miss Mondays: Each Mon • Best of Edmonton Tuesdays: Each Tue • Erik Griffin; until Apr 5 • Ben Gleib; Apr 8-12

LAUGH SHOP 1105-6606 137 Ave, Londonderry Mall, 780.476.1010 • Wed-Thu 8pm; Fri-Sat 7:30pm and 9:45pm • Wed amateur open mic night; 8pm • Simon King from Vancouver; until Apr 4 • Simon King from Vancouver; Apr 2-4 • Brian Stollery from Calgary; Apr 9-11

LION'S HEAD PUB Radisson Hotel Edmonton South, 4440 Gateway Boulevard, 780.437.6010 • Comedy open mic night every Sun (9pm) hosted by Lars Callieou

STEEPS TEA LOUNGE-COLLEGE PLAZA 11116-82 Ave, 780.988.8105 • Amateur Comedian Night: every Tue, 8-10:30pm • For info contact robyn@steepstea.com

WINSPEAR CENTRE • The Trailer Park Boys, Ricky, Bubbles and Julian • Thu, Apr 2, 8pm • \$49.50 at Winspear box office

QUEER LISTINGS

AFFIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER Sunnybrook United Church, Red Deer, 403.347.6073 • Affirm welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family, and allies meet the 2nd Tue, 7pm, each month

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP • A social group for bi-curious and bisexual women every 2nd Tue every month, 8pm • <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bwedmonton>

BOOTS BAR AND LOUNGE 10242-106 St, 780.423.5014, www.bootsbar.ca • 2nd Thu: Illusions Social Club • 3rd Wed: Edmonton O Society • 2nd Tue: Edmonton Rainbow Business Association • Every Fri: Philosophy Café • Fri and Sat DJ SeXXy Sean 10-3 • Long Weekend Sundays feature the Stardust Lounge with Miss Bianca and Vanity Fair

BUDDYS NITE CLUB 11725B Jasper Ave, 780.488.7736 • Nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDivya and Donnatella NE1 in The GoDonna Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ Sexxy Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'em famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common interests meet the 2nd Sun, 2:30pm, most months for a social period, a short meeting and a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. E: edmontonpt@yahoo.ca, www.primetimer-swww.org/edmonton

GLBT SPORTS AND RECREATION www.teamed-montion.ca • Women's Drop-In Recreational Badminton: Oliver School Gym, 10227-118 St, 780.465.3620; Wed, 6-7:30pm • Bootcamp: Lynnwood Elementary School at 15451-84 Ave; Mon, 7-8:15pm; bootcamp@teamedmontion.ca • Bowling: Gateway Lanes, 100, 3414 Gateway Blvd, Sat, 5-7pm; bowling@teamedmontion.ca • Curling: Mon, 7:15-9:15pm, Granite Curling Club; 780.463.5942 • Running: Sun, Tue, Thu; running@teamedmontion.ca • Swimming: NAIT pool, 11762-106 St; Tue, 8-9pm, Thu, 7:30-8:30pm; swimming@teamedmontion.ca • Volleyball: Tue Recreational: Mother Teresa Elementary School at 9008-105A, 8-10pm; Thu intermediate: Amiskiwaciy Academy, 101 Airport Rd, 8-10pm; recvolleyball@teamedmontion.ca, volleyball@teamedmontion.ca • YOGA (Hatha): Free Yoga; every Sun, 2-3:30pm; Korezone Fitness, 203, 10575-115 St; yoga@teamedmontion.ca

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB various locations • Crossdressers, transsexuals, friends and supporters meet 2nd Thu every month. For details go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton_illusions/

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu each month (fall/winter terms): Speakers Series, Contact Kris (kwells@ualberta.ca)

KOREZONE FITNESS 203, 10575-115 St • **LIVING POSITIVE** 404, 10408-124 St, www.edmlivingpositive.ca, 1.877.975.9448/780.488.5768, • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Tue, 7-9pm: Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculté St. Jean, Rm 3-18, 780.490.7332 • Program for HIV-AID'S prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • 3rd and 4th Sat, 9am-5pm each month • Free (member)/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

PLAY NIGHTCLUB 10220-103 St, www.playnight-club.ca • Open Thu, Fri, Sat • The first bar for the queer community to open in a decade with DJs Alexx Brown and Eddie Toonflash

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON 9540-111 Ave, 780.488.3234, www.pridecentreofedmonton.org • Open Tue-Fri 1-10pm, Sat 2-6:30pm • LGBT Seniors Drop-in: Every Tue/Thu, 2-4pm • CA: Every Thu (7pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big book study group meet every Sat, noon • Youth Understanding Youth: Youth up to 25 years, support and social group meet every Sat, 7-9pm; yuy@shaw.ca • Womospace: Board meeting 1st Sun each month, 10:30am-12:30pm • Trans Education/Support Group: Meet the 1st and 3rd Sun, 2-4pm, of each month; www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking with Pride: Every Sun (7pm); facilitator: Rob Wells rob.wells780@hotmail.com • HIV Support Group: Meet the 2nd Mon of each month, 7pm • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning (TTIQ) Alliance: Support meeting the 2nd Tue each month, 7:30pm • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning. Education, advocacy and support for men, women and youth: PFLAG Edmonton: Meet the 1st Wed each month, 7pm • Free short-term, solution-focused drop-in counseling; every Wed, 7-10pm • YouthSpace: drop-in for LGBTQ for youth up to 25; Tue-Sat, 3-7pm

PRISM BAR 10524-101 St, 780.990.0038 • Every Wed: Free Pool; Karaoke, 9pm-midnight • Every Thu: Prism Pool League; 7-11:30pm • Every Fri: Steak Nite; 5-9pm; DJ at 9:30pm

ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH 10209-123 St, 780.482.1587, www.rwuc.org • Soul Outing: an LGBT-focused alternative worship • 2nd Sun each month, 7pm; worship Sun, 10:30am; people of all sexual orientations welcome. A LGBT monthly book club and film night. Info email jravenscroft@rwuc.org

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 11526-76 Ave, 780.436.1555 • People of all sexual orientations are welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

WOMONSPACE 780.482.1794, www.womonspace.ca, womonspace@gmail.com • A Non-profit lesbian social organization for Edmonton and surrounding area. Organized monthly activities from dances, games nites, golf tournament, etc. Monthly newsletter and reduced rates included with membership. Confidentiality assured

WOODYS 11723 Jasper Ave, 780.488.6557 • Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tizzy and Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

SPECIAL EVENTS

EDMONTON'S FASHION FESTIVAL Trans Alta Arts Barn, 10330-84 Ave • Edmonton Fashion Week: Featuring local, Canadian and international designers, Salon Showcase (the Art of Coiffure), Makeup Showcase, Emerging Designer and Stylist Contest and Style Gallery, an urban fashion and design shopping market, and visual arts and photography • Apr 2-9, 8pm • \$15 (adv single ticket)/\$20 (door)/\$85 (VIP passes) TIX on the Square, door

EDMONTON FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ Artary, 9535 Jasper Ave • An evening event to raise funds to go directly to helping people in refugee camps, featuring music and the dual book launch of Field Basansikis' two new collections. All ages event until midnight • Apr 4-5 • \$10-\$20 (sliding scale)

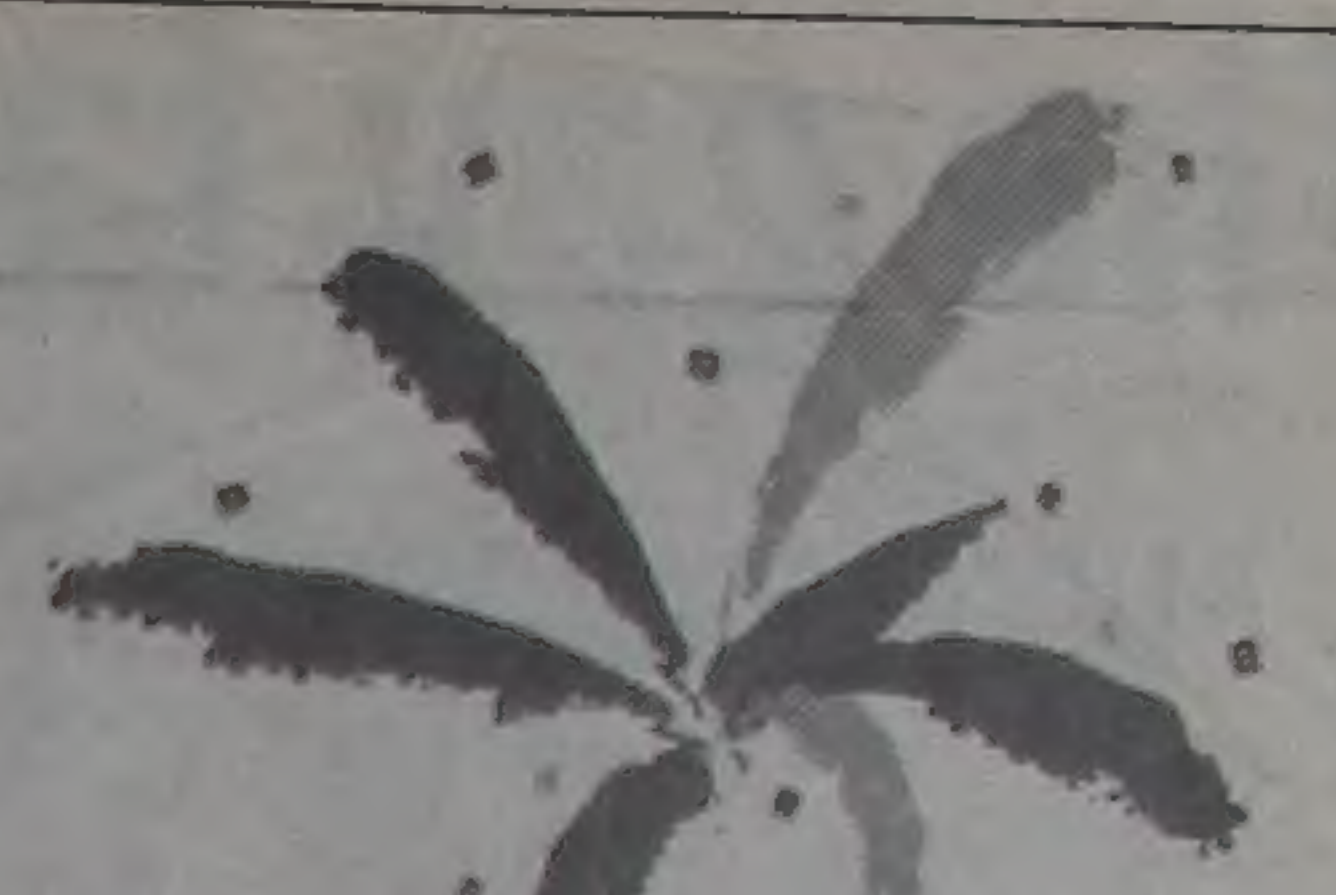
FASHION SHOW FOR REAL WOMEN Sands Hotel, Banquet Room • By R & L Studios • Thu, Apr 9 • \$5, ph Lara at 780.977.1151, 780.482.1105, or e-mail studiogirl1970@hotmail.com; Proceeds to Safe House For Women

INTERLUDE-AN IN BETWEEN TIME McDougall United Church, 10025-101 St, 780.428.1818 • Featuring Music by Keri Lynn Zwicker, HarpRouge Trio and readings and reflections by Timothy J. Anderson, and Rev. John Henry Weinlick • Sat, Apr 11, 3pm • Free

JABULA AFRICA! Crestwood Community Hall, 14325-96 Ave, 780.554.8735, www.everylifematters.ca • Celebrate Africa with live West African drumming and dancing. Appearance by Memeza Africa, a group from South Africa • Sat, Apr 4, 7-10pm • \$20 proceeds go to building homes for orphans and vulnerable children in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

MAYOR'S CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS Winspear Centre • Mayor Stephen Mandel presents the 22nd Annual Celebration of the Arts, an evening of performance and recognition • Mon, Apr 6, 7pm; 5pm (ticketed reception at the Citadel) • Tickets available at the Winspear box office, www.winspearcentre.com

SPIN AROUND THE CLOCK WEM Ice Palace, 70 St, 87 Ave, 780.437.0023 • Spin 24/Dance 12: Livia Stoyke Foundation presented by Freedom 55, fundraiser, participants raise money for a number of creative community programs; 24 hours of non-stop music, entertainment, food, prizes, refreshments • Apr 3-4 • Free




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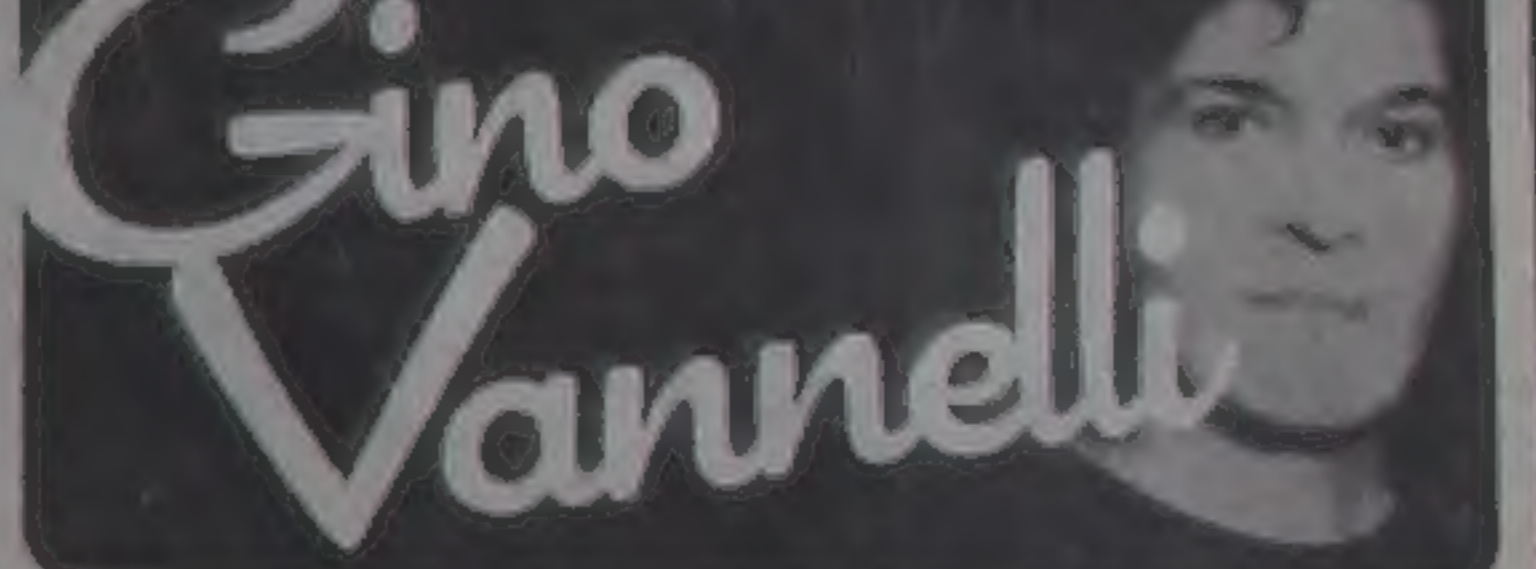


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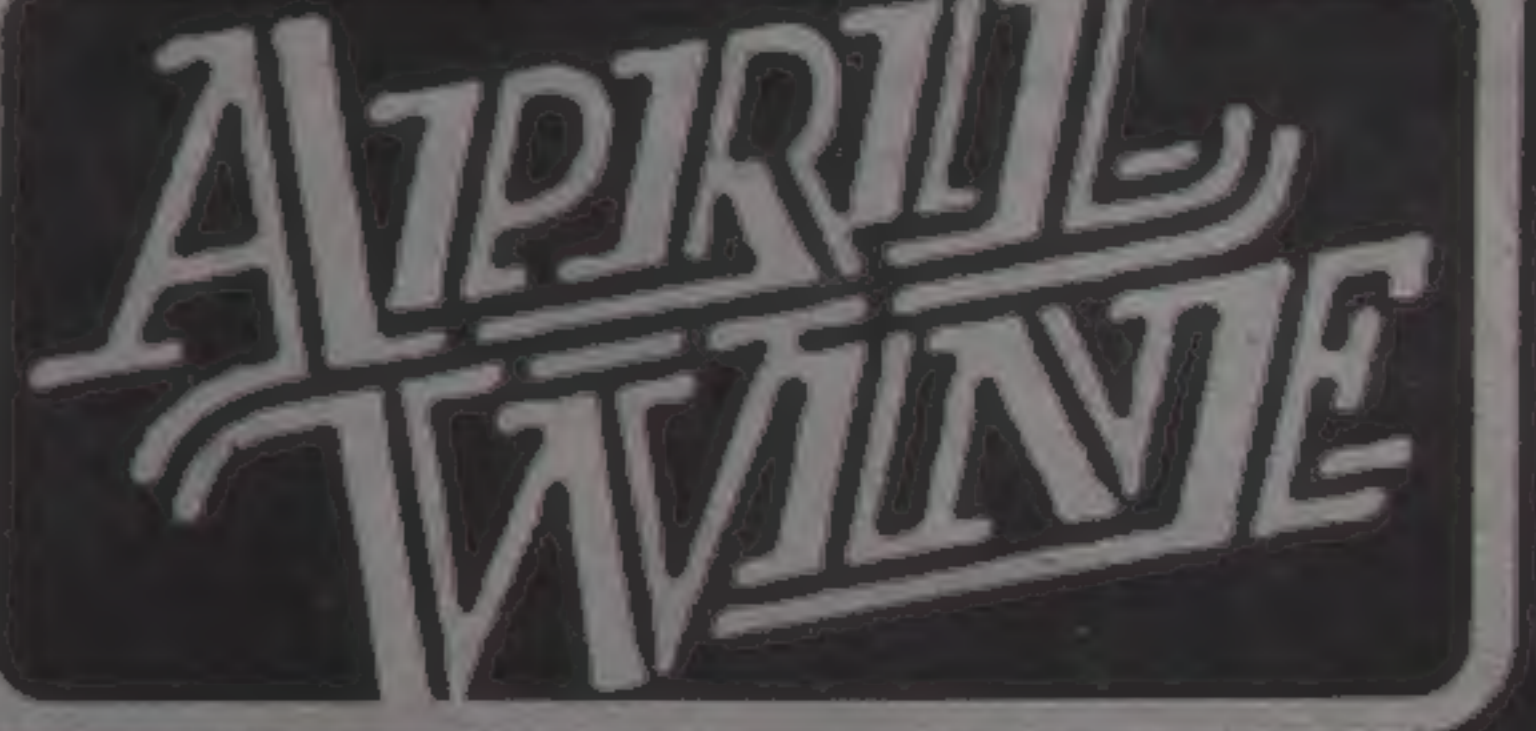


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The gay factory

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When the Roost closed its doors at the end of 2007, no one bar in town took its place. A handful of existing and new bars instead began catering to specific groups of gay people—Boots has become mostly for older guys and bears, Buddys for twinks, Prism for ladies and Play has specific nights for various groups (jocks, fetish, etc).

Around the same time I noticed this bar situation I came across the term "reification" in my comparative literature course, and it seemed to resonate with what has gone on in gay culture generally and helps to explain why gay bars in the city are now catering to specific lifestyles rather than to gay people in general.

Reification, according to theorist Fredric Jamerson, is "the way in which under capitalism, older traditional forms of human activity are reorganized and analytically fragmented and reconstructed according to models of efficiency." The Marxist thinker Ernest Mandel points to detective novels as an example of how a human activity, in this case death, has been reframed to no longer be something that just happens but something that needs to be solved, and along the way commodified.

In the class I couldn't help but think that in the last 40 years—with gay bars as just one example—homosexuality has become reified. No longer does "gay" refer only to forms of human activity (homosexual sex), it has been reorganized and constructed to describe a type of lifestyle. When we say it is a gay magazine or a gay TV show, it is not

because the magazine or TV show depict same-sex sex, but rather because it showcases a lifestyle designed to be desirable to gay people. A good example of this is the fact that for the most part many people still don't know what lesbians do in bed, but ask a random sampling of individuals to describe what a lesbian looks like or what a lesbian's hobbies might be and you likely hear descriptions that sound like they came from *The L Word's* central casting office.

In many ways the advertising of a gay lifestyle has been great. For some people it has been a lifesaver to see gays on TV, letting them know that gay people do exist. But this reconfiguring way to look at homosexuality has also meant that gay people have shifted from being a minority group to being a marketing demographic.

Instead of being seen as a group working towards equality, gays are seen as being good for business. We see this manifested in urbanist Richard Florida's idea that gays are

good (read: profitable) for cities, and in the efforts of advertisers to woo the "pink dollar," a term that refers to the buying power of gay people. (Mirroring mainstream culture, the majority of the gay buying power is in the hands of men—how else do explain Cher's once-never-ending farewell tour and the fact that it was *Will and Grace* not Jill and Glenn.)

THE MOVE TOWARDS focusing on gay as a buyable lifestyle has, of course, intertwined sexual orientation and class. If gay is understood as a lifestyle rather than an orientation then it becomes hard to imagine someone as a sexual minority if they don't fit into the marketplace's definition of being gay. And it's even more difficult to imagine that someone is a victim of homophobia if you don't recognize them as gay. This is why it may be easy to support your gay male neighbour as they tell you about their homonegative boss but it's more difficult to imagine that it is systemic homophobia that has lead to a

homeless bisexual youth asking you for money.

In the end, in order to gain legitimacy in western culture—and along with it all the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the majority—you must be part of the marketplace. As the marketplace becomes more competitive you must diversify. In the wake of the Roost's final night it was no longer commercially viable just to serve beer to gays, you had to serve beer to specific kinds of gays.

Ernest Mandel's major criticism of reification is the lack of room it makes for complexity. Just think of the detective novel again: everything in the end has to be black and white. Every who-done-it must eventually be seen as an open-and-shut case. But everyone knows that gay is a rainbow, or as filmmaker Derek Jarman said, "Sexuality is as wide as the sea."

So why would we want to go to bars where we're all the same? It makes no sense to me, but maybe I just miss the Roost. Or maybe I just don't understand reification. ▽

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NYC Midnight's (www.NYCMidnight.com); Sixth
Annual Screenwriter's Challenge; Apr 17-25; **entry
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Mostly Water Theatre is accepting submissions for
the next installment of Metro Digital Shorts (5 min or
less) to Metro Digital Shorts, 6-22 Stanley Milner
Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq, Edmonton, AB,
T5J 2V5 by Wed, **Apr 8**. For info contact Sam
Varteniuk at 780.686.5960,
samvarteniuk@hotmail.com

Write Off! The Isabel Miller Young Miller Young
Writers award for poetry or fiction (ages 12-18);
Deadline: May 1 info at www.epl.ca/youthwriting-contest

The Handmade Mafia, a craft collective, is starting a
monthly market in Edmonton on the 1st Sat every
month **starting Apr 4** at the Savoy and Orange Hall.
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For info E: Ally: msallyng@gmail.com, Amy: amyjedgar@hotmail.com

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DEAR ANDREA:
I'm not 40, like the author of the "Forty and Frustrated" letter ("Cave woman," Mar 19-Mar 25, 2009), but I'm afflicted with another "less than desirable" characteristic: colour. Oh, and a bit of meat on my bones, but that's never been much of a problem. I'm a black woman and date all sorts of men. Online has never been the right place for me to meet men because in a field of redheads and green eyes men pass right by my photo. Dealing online can be incredibly difficult, and I got absolutely no interest except from men I am not interested in. If I happened to get an interested male inquiry I, too, found that the communication petered out quickly.

Several years back I moved to the city on my own. Finally, no roommates, no significant other, just me. My friends were in relationships or newly married and I had to find activities that allowed me to have fun and meet single men. When I went out with friends I was always just another girl in the crowd.

I got the best results when I began going out totally by myself, walking into an establishment where I knew no one, ordering a drink, sitting at the bar and looking desirable and approachable with a book or a snack. A month ago I even had a CL Missed Connections ad placed for me by a nice Irish man after visiting a local pub and having a burger and a beer. It is a 99.9 per cent given, if you are female and alone, that a male will walk up to you and begin a conversation. Despite your age, your looks, your size, your ethnicity, if a man sees you alone, without a crew of other females to

choose from, he will feel compelled to find out your story and if he has a shot with you.

A few years ago, out by myself, I met a man I had eyed a few times over the years. We chatted. We joked. We got to know each other. Two-and-a-half years later we're still together.

We both have an independent nature which leads me to still frequent places on my own. I'm approached each and every time. We as women, I feel, need to just step it up a notch and realize that we need to depend mostly on ourselves and not our friends or the Internet to hook us up or place us in situations where we'll meet people.

So, my advice to "Forty & Frustrated" would be to put on a sexy pair of jeans and head to her nearest pub by herself. Leave the girlfriends—who are potential competition, whether we like to admit it or not—at home and head out on your

own and get what you want.

It will take time to sift through the men... just like online, but being an attractive, witty, sensual, smart woman presenting herself as available will get you way more results than presenting herself as an attractive, witty, sexual, smart woman via some blurry photo surrounded by other blurry photos of other attractive, witty, sexual, smart women.

LOVE, WENT OUT ALONE AND GOT ATTACHED

DEAR UM, WOAGA:

Now that is an interesting take! I mean, sure, the fact that a woman sitting alone at a bar or club will attract a cloud of buzzing males is not news. It is in fact a source of annoyance for women who really do want to be alone, or who are innocently waiting for a friend and would like to enjoy at least a few moments of public solitude, so certainly we know that it works. What's interesting is that hitting the bars or clubs is usually seen as putting oneself into direct competition with other women (or whatever one's category happens to be) who are likewise putting

themselves out there. This is true as far as it goes, but you have a good point, not entirely stated, that very few women do go out on their own to meet guys, so actually there isn't as much competition as one might think.

Surely you can see why going it alone might not be many women's first choice. It is scary, it is lonely and one fears that it whiffs at least faintly of desperation, never a lady's preferred perfume. I do think you've done a lovely job of recasting it as one carefully considered option for the plucky and indomitable single gal (sorry, but I'm now seeing you as a sort of Doris Day of colour, in a cute shift dress and scarf). The only problem is that lots of people don't drink, or don't want to meet people who drink or don't want to meet people while drinking. So we will have to redirect some of our plucky, spunky heroines to coffee shops, galleries and the park on Saturday afternoon. Alone. If this has worked for you, readers, please let us know.

LOVE, ANDREA

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Do you remember someone who believed in you when you were a child? Be that person in a child's life today. All it takes is one hour a week, which may not be much to you but will make all the difference in the life of a child. Be a Big Brother or Big Sister! Be a Mentor! Call Big Brother Big Sister today. 424-8181

Volunteers needed to "make fun" at the Edmonton International Street Performers Festival running July 3-12; apply online at www.edmontonstreetfest.com; E: volunteer@edmontonstreetfest.com; T: Liz Allison-Jorde 780.425.5162. Volunteers must be a minimum of 14 yrs old

Do you love the ARTS? Join us and be a part of North America's LARGEST Outdoor FREE Art & Design

Festival! Volunteer! Download your application at www.theworks.ab.ca

Volunteer website for youth 14-24 years old. www.youthvolunteer.ca

Pilgrims Hospice Society (9808-148 St) looking for part-time cook (approx 8-20/day) for Mon, Tues, Wed. Requirements: meal planning, shopping, working with volunteers, working independently, and a valid food-safety certificate. Send resume: JackieD@pilgrimshospice.ca or fax at 780.413.9748

Volunteer drivers and kitchen help urgently needed. If you're available weekdays, 10am-1pm call **Meals on Wheels**. 780.429.2020

Volunteer with your Pet, The Chimo Animal Assisted Therapy Project uses animals in therapy sessions with trained therapists to help the clients achieve specific goals. Info: www.chimoproject.ca. E: volunteer@chimoproject.ca or T: 780.452.2452

Dr.'s Appointment Buddy—Accompany new refugee immigrants to their medical appointments to give support and assist with paperwork. Thu, 10:30am-2:30pm. Transportation not required. Leslie 780.432.1137, ext 357

CANADIAN LIVER FOUNDATION is looking for enthusiastic volunteers for presentations and special events. Call Carmen at 780.444.1547

P.A.L.S. Project Adult Literacy Society needs volunteers to work with adult students in the ESL English as a Second Language Program. Call 780.424.5514. Training and materials are provided

Guerrilla Gardening need volunteers to help plant 600 sapling trees along baseline road. E: theurbangreening@gmail.com, T: 780.432.6181 for info. Facebook: <http://edmontongg.blogspot.com>

The Support Network: Volunteer today to be a Distress Line Listener. Apply on line at: www.thesupportnetwork.com or call 780.732.6648

Break the Code! Help an adult to read and write. Call Jordan Centre for Family Literacy 780.421.7323 www.familit.ca

Volunteers Needed to work with new immigrants in a variety of tasks and with some great fun events and outings! Many exciting shifts available! Call Judy 780.424.3545, ext 249

Red Cross's Humanitarian Issues Program: need volunteers to help promote humanitarian issues to the Edmonton Community. We are hoping to expand our youth team (12-24 yrs old). Contact Laura Keegan at laura.keegan@redcross.ca

Welcome Spring by Volunteering with the 2009 Iris Campaign! Flower Handlers & Drivers Needed April 20-21-22. Visit www.iriscampaign.ca for info or call 780.720.3107

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Senior's Birthday Entertainment
Senior recreation/activity centre needs volunteer entertainers for monthly afternoon parties.
Weekday message Karen 780.468.1985 seesa.ca

E.C.A.W.A.R. (EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM) Volunteers welcome. www.wage-peace.com for info/contacts, 780.988.2713

Had Enough?
Cocaine Anonymous 780.425.2715

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS Help Line
24 Hours a Day—7 Days a Week
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SERVICES

SACE—Public Education Program: Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (www.sace.ab.ca) provides crisis intervention, info, counseling, public education. T: 780.423.4102/F: 780.421.8734/E: info@sace.ab.ca; www.sace.ab.ca/24 Hour Crisis Line: 780.423.4121

Are you an International Medical Graduate seeking licensure? The Alberta International Medical Graduates Association is here to help. Support, study groups, volunteer opportunities—all while creating change for tomorrow. www.aimga.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association,

www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca Education Program offer workshops to give skills to intervene with people who may be at risk for suicide. Follow the links to ASIST or call 780.414.6300

Have you been affected by another person's sexual behavior? S-Anon is a 12-Step fellowship for family members and friends of sex addicts. T: 780.988.4411 for info, or visit www.sanon.org

Jewish Family Services Edmonton/TASIS (Transforming Acculturative Stress Into Success): A free program aimed at minimizing culture shock and displacement for trained professional immigrant women. T: Svetlana 780.454.1194 E: community@jfsse.org

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VUEWEEKLY CONTEST RULES:

Unless otherwise specified, the following will apply:

- the winner must be 18 or older.
- prize must be accepted as awarded.
- no one may enter any contest more than once.
- you may only win once every 60 days.
- Vue Weekly reserves the right to exclude anyone from our contests.
- no staff, sponsors or members of their immediate families may enter.
- the personal information of those who enter will not be sold but may be provided to contest sponsors.
- the chances of winning depend on the number of entries received.
- by entering, entrants consent to the use of their names by Vue Weekly for publicity.
- Vue Weekly is not responsible for prizes unclaimed after 15 days.
- by entering with an email address one authorizes oneself to be added to FIRSTREAD!

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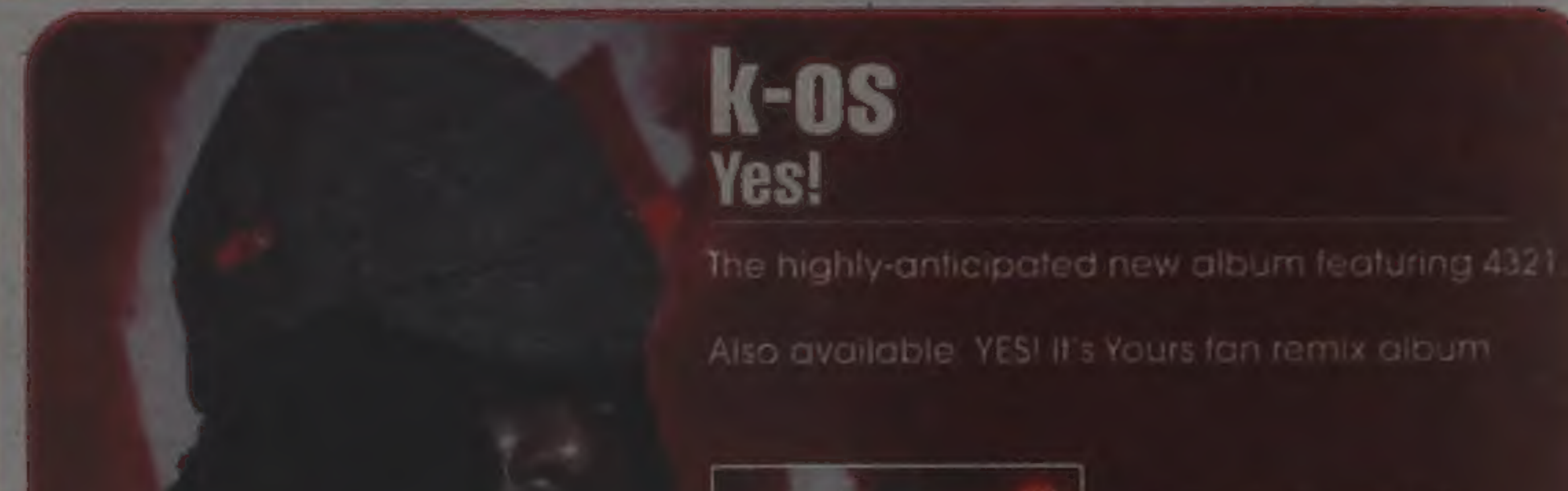
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IN CONCERT: April 11 - Edmonton Events Centre
bennybenassi.com

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